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The Editors
NUKES FOR ALL?

ONE DOLLAR

DECEMBER 7, 1979

CHRISTMAS BOOKS **HARVEY COX** *ANNIE DILLARD* *ANNE FREMANTLE* **JANET GROTH** *BARBARA GRIZZUTI HARRISON* **JOHN N. KOTRE** **SAUL MALOFF** *DAVID O'BRIEN* **PHEME PERKINS** *ROBERT PHILLIPS* **GORDON ZAHN**

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BELOW THE SALT • BESIDE THE SALT • AGAINST THE SALT • THREE ARTICLES

Also: *John Deedy on* Sacco & Vanzetti • *John Garvey on* Feeling Good • *Thomas Powers on* War by Computer • *Nina Polcyn Moore on* Mary Widman

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Correspondence

And you're welcome

Maryknoll, N.Y.

To the Editors: A word of appreciation for the excellence of your issue of October 26th.

I thought your editorial "From Charisma to Leadership" simply the best appreciation of the pope's visit to this country which I've seen. It was generous in its praise, fair in its critique, and insightful in indicating the theological issues which cause concern.

In that same issue John Garvey's reflections on celibacy is one of the finest short statements which I have read on an issue which seems to suffer as much from the rhetoric of its proponents as from the incomprehension of its opponents. Mr. Garvey's spareness of statement and delicacy of understanding were much appreciated.

Double thanks.

(REV.) ROBERT IMBELLI

A winter's tale

Hammond, Ind.

To the Editors: It was spitting snow this late October morn when my Oct. 26th. *Commonweal* arrived with John Garvey's "A Married Layman on Celibacy." No arguments for celibacy have ever made sense to me over my years of priesthood, for there is still the stuff of loneliness to endure—a realm not open to argument. John Garvey enters this realm.

On December twenty-first, almost twelve years ago, I became a priest. I entered the active ministry one week before *Humanae Vitae* hit the scene. These have been gestalt years. Last December I was writing Christmas cards and it occurred to me that I became a priest on the first day of winter. It has been a winter priesthood—not many happy times—but times filled with life and meaning. It has been a priesthood closed-in near the hearth, not in the sunny freshness of the meadow.

I have discovered along the way—hesitatingly—that the essence of my loneliness is not just darkness and the taste of my heartbeat. The voice of my loneliness is the quiet breathing of God. Deep friendships have brought me to this, and the inevitable goodbyes. "Celibacy is a kind of fast," says Garvey, "it makes sense only if God is real . . . It is a manifestation of the fact that there is a love which suffices absolutely, and it is offered to each single human being, as well as to the community." This touches me—for I come upon my God as I meet my loneliness. And I learn that nothing else remains to be discovered except compassion.

Winter thoughts. Nothing wrong with winter. For some of us celibates it is a winter priesthood, and one we *do* celebrate each December twenty-first close to the hearth. John Garvey indeed makes some precious sense to a man who was ordained on the first day of winter.

(REV.) PATRICK J. CONNOLLY
Principal, Bishop Noll Institute

Indissolubility

Wausau, Wisc.

To the Editors: In his Oct. 26 article, "A Married Man on Celibacy," John Garvey makes many astute observations. However, I question the statement that "Jesus says that celibacy is undertaken for the sake of the kingdom of Heaven by those whose hearts can bear it," although this is the traditional interpretation of Matthew 19:10-12.

These verses are the final part of the discussion on the indissolubility of marriage in Matthew 19:3-12. In this discussion, the disciples argued that if marriage is indissoluble, then it is not advisable to marry. Jesus replied, "It is not everyone who can accept what I have said, but only those to whom it is granted. There are eunuchs born that way from their mother's womb, there are eunuchs made so by men and there are eunuchs who have made themselves that way for the sake of the kingdom of Heaven." Jesus then ended the discussion by saying, "Let him accept this who can."

Within the overall context of the discussion, doesn't the pronoun "this" refer to the subject of the discussion, the indissolubility of marriage, rather than to celibacy which is mentioned only in the last phrase of the previous sentence? Isn't Jesus saying that marriage is not for everyone; that yes, there are some for whom marriage is not advisable, that there are those who are incapable of marriage—some are born that way, some are made that way by their fellowman, and some make themselves that way for the sake of the kingdom of Heaven—but nonetheless, indissolubility (with one exception) is the way it is—take it or leave it?

Today we have a deeper understanding of love, marriage, and ourselves. We can now recognize that there are those who are so self-absorbed that concern for others is excluded. They have little capacity for the caring, sharing, and cooperating, the openness and trust, the flexibility, sensitivity, and selflessness necessary to sustain a life-long love relationship. The majority are self-absorbed because others have failed to love them, but some do seem to be born with a self-centeredness that remains undiminished no matter how much they are loved. In this context, Jesus's reference to celibacy as the third example seems more a statement of the fact that some freely choose celibacy and not an endorsement of celibacy over marriage or a special invitation to celibacy as a requirement of the priesthood.

MARILYN KRAMER

Commonweal welcomes letters on subjects treated in its pages. Letters of not more than 250 or 300 words naturally have a better chance of being published.

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HANGING OVER OUR HEADS

DID SOUTH AFRICA or some nation unknown set off a nuclear explosion near the coast of Africa some weeks ago? No one can say for sure. On Sept. 22 a Defense Department satellite detected an intense flash of light of the sort characteristic of a nuclear explosion while passing over a remote expanse of ocean. Members of Congress who have been briefed on the matter think South Africa was responsible for the explosion, but Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance said that the evidence of a nuclear explosion was so inconclusive that it was impossible to state categorically that South Africa or any other country had actually detonated an atomic device. Whether South Africa did explode a bomb or not, it is no secret that it and Israel could very soon explode a nuclear device if they cared to do so. Nor are South Africa and Israel alone. There are already fifteen countries which do not have nuclear weapons but theoretically have the capability of building them. with or without the aid of *Progressive* magazine, and by the mid-eighties it is calculated that as many as thirty-five countries will have accumulated enough plutonium to make several dozen nuclear weapons.

Pakistan is a good example of the problem. The country under its military ruler, General Mohammed Zia ul-Haq, has become an increasingly authoritarian Islamic state. More than three hundred opposition political leaders have recently been put under arrest, and public lashings as punishment for various offenses have become a regular feature of the Pakistani scene. As life gets increasingly harsh at home, Pakistan confronts its old enemy, India, which has already exploded an atomic device, as well as a new enemy, Soviet-backed Afghanistan.

General Zia insists that Pakistan is aiming only at nuclear power for energy production, but U.S. officials are unconvinced. Until recently, American experts thought a Pakistani nuclear explosion ws at least two years away; now they are considerably less sure. After lengthy negotiations with Secretary Vance, Pakistani delegates expressed willingness to place all that country's nuclear facilities under international safeguards and inspections but only if India would do the same. So far India has refused, and there are no signs that it is likely to change its mind.

The consequences of a successful atomic explosion in the undeveloped and unstable country of Pakistan would be grave. It would almost certainly bring about a nuclear arms race with its traditional enemy, India, and would pose a constant threat of the first use of atomic weapons against human targets since Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It would also be a serious setback in efforts to curb the spread of atomic weapons throughout the world. It might well mark the beginning of an era when not only small nations but even well organized terrorist groups starting with the PLO could blackmail the world with nuclear weapons.

Can Pakistan be stopped? At this point the signs are not favorable. Pakistan managed to lay its hands on the technological know-how, some say by theft, and

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purchased the crucial components of its nuclear plant before the U.S. and other countries woke up to what was afoot. Now experts think Pakistan has gone too far to be stopped by the denial of sensitive technology or key parts. Some months ago the United States cut off all economic and military aid to Pakistan because of its nuclear weapons program, but so far this has been ineffective. Indeed, some in Congress argue that exactly the opposite course should be followed, that what Pakistan needs is aid in the form of conventional arms so that the country would feel secure without nuclear weapons.

It may be too late to lock the stable door on Pakistan. But one thing is sure: to keep the same sort of thing from happening again, we need stringent measures of export control to make any other move in the direction of nuclear weapons expensive and difficult, to insure that such efforts would be detected early and, it is to be hoped, stopped before they get started. Above all, what is needed is a sense of urgency in the cause of creating international safeguards that will restrain and eventually ban all nuclear weapons. Early in November the alarm went out to our defense forces that a missile attack had been launched against the United States. As it turned out, the alert was a false alarm. But unless we can contain U.S.-USSR rivalry and check nuclear proliferation throughout the world, the danger is that some day soon the alarm will not be false. At this point, would anyone outside of Iran feel safer if the Ayatollah Khomeini had atomic bombs at his disposal?

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

The following is a dispatch from Religious News Service:

NEW YORK (RNS)—After being abandoned by the working class, the Roman Catholic Church in the United States is now falling out of favor with women.

So says a public opinion poll published in the Catholic weekly *Our Sunday Visitor*, which confirms an impression given by Father Jean-Marie Aubert, professor of theology at the University of Strasbourg, in his just-published book, "Christianity and Anti-femininity."

According to the poll, only nine percent of women between the ages of 18 and 34 are practicing Catholics who go to Mass every Sunday. Twenty-three percent go to Mass several times a year and 67 percent go rarely or never.

The move away from the church by women is found in the little interest they show in the church's stand on such questions as abortion and contraception. More than 25 percent of American women who claim to be practicing Catholics say they are not, or at most only slightly, interested in the church's position on the issues. On the question of contraception, women between the ages of 35 and 64 show least interest in what the church thinks (53 percent).

When asked, "Do you expect the church to help you?", 76 to 85 percent of women between the ages of 18 and 34 replied "no." Most positive replies came from women in the upper executive class.

Middle class women made up the majority of those who did not look to the church for help.

Finally, 50 percent of the women questioned considered that women had too little to say in church decisions. This view was shared by 25 percent of practicing Catholic women and, again, was strongest among women in the upper executive class.

That's the Religious News Service story in its entirety. The only liberty we have taken with it was to change Paris to New York, French to American, and La Vie To Our Sunday Visitor. *We just hope it won't be possible to use it in this country, exactly as it is, in ten or twenty years.*

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Sacco & Vanzetti

ANARCHIST CONNECTION

MORE THAN GOOD IMMIGRANTS

WHEN THEN-GOVERNOR Michael Dukakis of Massachusetts issued his 1977 proclamation removing "stigma and disgrace" from Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, the Italian immigrant anarchists convicted and executed for murders occurring during a 1920 South Braintree payroll robbery, one might have imagined their case moving into the archives of fascinating crimes and trials of yesterday, to be resurrected and dusted off on some anniversary or for some new journalistic or dramatic treatment, but a case essentially over, settled and packed away. That did not happen. The case has moved, in fact, into a new and provocative phase of discussion.

This became clear during a recent two-day conference sponsored by the Boston Public Library in conjunction with the presentation to the library of the papers and memorabilia of the late Aldino Felicani, printer, anarchist, and friend of Vanzetti, who served as treasurer of the Sacco-Vanzetti defense committee and who led the fight over long years for their vindication. Conference speakers, pro-Sacco-Vanzetti to the core, maintained that a central point of conviction had been reached on the issues of guilt or innocence ("they were important") and the quality of justice they were accorded ("monstrous"), and that it was time now to proceed to a matter whose full exploration until lately had been impossible. This is the extent to which Sacco and Vanzetti might have been victims of a larger conspiracy to rid the country of anarchists and other troublemakers.

The notion that Sacco and Vanzetti were tried and convicted for their anarchism rather than the charges brought against them is not at all new. But efforts to substantiate this theory consistently ran up against the stonewall of restricted government files. This is a new day, however. The Freedom of Information Act has opened up these files, and Sacco-Vanzetti partisans are champing to get at the data. At least one Sacco-Vanzetti historian, Robert D'Attilio, has already begun the search, and his preliminary finding is that the role of the Department of Justice in the case was much more than it ever admitted publicly. He is fearful, however, that files may have been destroyed and others lost in Washington's bureaucratic jungle. He told of one Department of Justice document relating to the case turning up in the files of the State Department.

No one at the conference blinked an eyelash at the possibility of collusion by government in the fate of Sacco and Vanzetti. The revelations of recent years about government conspiracies to assassinate and defame people, from rulers of countries to movie actresses, makes anything thinkable. Certainly the times could have quickened instincts to collude. The 1920s was the period of the "Red scare," the fear that the revolution successful in Russia would sweep Europe and leap the Atlantic. It was also the period of the Americanizing of modern America, and there was little room in this America for anarchists bent on establishing a proletariat socialism. As Professor Eric Foner of City College, City University of New York, remarked, "In the 1920s we see a new kind of America emerging. It is the first decade of mass consumption as a mode of integrating workers into the social structure. It is an era of mass media and mass culture. It is an era of attacks on labor unions. It is an era that marked the end of unrestricted immigration and the formation of a new work force shorn of its radicalism." It followed, in Foner's logic, that the society had bigger-than-life heroes—Ruth, Lindbergh—and bigger-than-life villains—Sacco, Vanzetti. The heroes were deified; the villains crucified.

This may be all scenario, but in the opinion of Sacco-Vanzetti partisans it is scenario that squares with historical fact. Sacco and Vanzetti have come down through the years as the romanticized "good shoemaker and poor fish-peddler," but as the present generation of Sacco-Vanzetti scholars are willing to admit, and admitted time and again during the Boston conference, Sacco and Vanzetti were true, dedicated anarchists. "These men were not philosophical anarchists," said Nunzio Pernicone of the University of Illinois, dismissing the term invented by 1920's liberals embarrassed by Sacco's and Vanzetti's anarchism and rationalizing it away as merely philosophical. "These men," said Pernicone, "were genuine revolutionists who believed that capitalist society had to be overthrown to achieve true liberty and justice." This, of course, is what anti-Sacco-Vanzetti people have charged all along, and they are sure to welcome the belated admission by Sacco-Vanzetti partisans. Paul Avrich of Queens College, City University of New York, called the failure to come to grips with the "anarchist connection" the greatest single failure of Sacco-Vanzetti literature, and he argued that it must be confronted, if only so as to understand better what happened to the pair. Not many seemed afraid of the possibility that pursuit of the "anarchist connection" could turn up evidence compromising Sacco and Vanzetti beyond the redemption of history or public opinion.

There were a number of graduate students at the conference from Boston's law schools and universities, and speakers vied with one another in seeking to enroll them in the case as writers of dissertations. Several suggested specific topics, including James Shenton of Columbia University, who recommended study of the role played by the Catholic church. Shenton noted that Cardinal O'Connell intervened with Governor Fuller for a stay of execution for Sacco and Vanzetti, and speculated that this was done at the direction of the Vatican and under some parallel pressure from Cardinal Hayes of New York City. Barbara Miller Solomon of Harvard University discounted O'Connell's intervention, labeling it "an act of conformism"

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by the time he took it. He tried for seven years to stay out of the case, she said. It was a small point of disagreement that only accented Shenton's contention that the church's role needs study and clarification.

The conference drew together three hundred persons, including several from that aged remnant that marched and protested in Boston's streets a half-century ago for Sacco and Vanzetti. One man of advanced years had the pleasure of glimpsing himself in an old film of the funeral procession for the pair, following their electrocution in 1927 in Charlestown State Prison. Vincenzina Vanzetti, who was six when her brother Bartolomeo left Italy for the United States and 20 when he died, traveled from Italy for the conference, and she confessed to the *Boston Globe* that her bitterness with America still existed "in a certain degree—but not for the people, for the institutions." Sacco's son, Spencer, was expected to come from Newport, R.I., but he stayed away, citing illness in the family. The excuse was valid, but his absence not surprising. He has always maintained a curious detachment from the case. He told library officials he would visit their exhibition of Felicani materials "privately."

As for the conference, though it pointed directions, it answered no large questions. It did not even supply a simple answer to the query from one participant whether this country could have another Sacco-Vanzetti case. The answer to that had to be both no and yes—*no* in the sense that the judicial monstrosities of the 1920s have been corrected and today there are more avenues of appeal; *yes* in the sense that societies do get fearful and can panic, and when they do they can catch up people and punish them. It is reason, many felt, why the Sacco-Vanzetti case cannot close, now or ever.

JOHN DEEDY

(John Deedy, former managing editor of Commonweal, *is a free-lance writer living in Massachusetts.)*

Of several minds: *John Garvey*

FEELING GOOD

IT MEANS NEVER HAVING TO SAY YOU'RE SORRY

"I FEEL GOOD about myself." A variation: "I'm feeling good about myself now." (This usually comes toward the end of a story about an affair that has ended or a collapsed marriage.)

A close relative to the above: "I'm trying to get in touch with my feelings." The last time I tried to get in touch with my feelings they were out, so I left a note . . .

Well, it does tempt, this sort of language. You look for a trace of humor, and have to conclude that the person who feels bad about himself will, for all his sorry creeping around, make fewer world-class blunders than the person who feels good about himself. The strut always leads to the banana peel, a cosmic law if ever there was one.

I have heard this kind of sentence, and you probably have too, for the past several years, usually from friends whose personal lives are in various states of disarray and who need to get some purchase on things as the ground beneath them turns to swamp. I have also heard it from people who have mild doubts about their own worth and from people who have emerged in one piece from struggles involving divorce, the precarious thing we call "sexual identity" these days, career problems—this "feeling good about myself" is nearly a virus. It will probably enter politics soon as the only answer to Chappaquiddick. ("No, the question doesn't bother me anymore. It took a few years, but now I feel good about myself . . .") It seems to be the bottom line in places where guilt used to lurk. Where people once said, "I'm sorry, I acted like a real jerk," now they say "I can't help how *you* feel about it—I feel good about myself." Self-love means never having to say you're sorry. There is something finally circular and unanswerable about feeling good about yourself, something neat and sleek, like disco.

There must be more to the feeling than this. It certainly beats hell out of self-loathing, and rightly so: no one should feel bad about his very being—that's too heavy and even foolish a load to carry. In the case of murderers (a couple of whom have admitted to feeling bad about themselves) it seems understandable, but even there it is probably exaggerated, maybe a form of pride. Self-loathing is a kind of hypochondria: it is like listening hard to your heartbeat, convinced that it's going wrong. Self-loathing is a refined narcissism, a back-door way of paying attention to yourself.

Granting that feeling bad about myself is a bad idea, is its real opposite to be found in feeling good about myself? Two of the people who told me that they felt good about themselves had just seen their marriages collapse not only under themselves but also under their children. Does a "feeling good" declaration amount to a declaration of independence from what has really happened to you, a statement that despite everything you know you can survive? I don't mean to deny the reality of the feeling, which is plainly real; but what can it mean to declare it?

A person who makes it through a period of scary uncertainty intact can find, at the end, a surprising and deep hopefulness. The ability to feel things at all is a proof of life, and it is profoundly refreshing after a bad time. But "feeling good about myself" or "getting in touch with my feelings" can't really help here, because this is the language of alienation, suggesting that I am here, and my self or

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my feelings are over there, waiting for evaluation or contact. The self, seen as an object among other objects, a thing we can handle and deal with, is a bad idea.

Unfortunately, the self seems to be all we have, especially after faith in everything else has gone: "I feel (good or bad), therefore I am." Now we worry less about what we should do than about how we should feel. Feelings impress us as being more substantial than anything else; in some way they are criteria for judging the importance of what we live through. After disasters reporters stand around the grieving survivors with microphones, and the first question is always, "How did you *feel*?" It is stupid and, given the times, inevitable. Our feelings are our contact with the self—whatever that is. We presume that the self is something we can work on, polishing it into the shape we like; what we want to be is what we are, say the *est* people, and the problem is finding out what we really want.

On a television commercial a woman roars toward me with an expression on her face which would be alarming in any real social circumstance. "I love my new cinnamon-colored hair," she says, nearly dissolving with pleasure, "because it lets me be *me*." In other words, I am what I want to be—that's the best way to be, and it means feeling good about myself. A personality which took this too seriously would finally be insulated from anything outside itself. It was possible for Nazis to feel good about themselves—this was the feeling encouraged by *The Triumph of Will*. Self, as a criterion, has a way of forcing everything else out of the picture.

A religious educator told me that the children and adults she worked with suffered from poor self-images. That is too bad, but she felt that she should work at providing good self-images. I disagree. I think we are better off with a less complete scaffolding. A solid sense of self is an idol, according to the desert fathers; Buddhism calls our sense of an enduring self an illusion. If there is anything unanimous in most religious traditions it is the belief that you have to dispense with the self to see the world as it is. A solid sense of self, a self-image, is (like new cinnamon-colored hair) a brittle and silly thing to walk into the world wearing, whether you feel good about it or not.

JOHN GARVEY

Of several minds: *Thomas Powers*

WAR BY COMPUTER

OOPS! I REALLY MEANT TO PUSH BUTTON B

IF YOU'LL think about it for a minute, you'll see why it makes sense to fight a nuclear war by computer. Since the United States and the Soviet Union can both deliver thousands of warheads, and since launch-to-target time can vary from several hours down to three or four minutes, and since the results of the first half of the war logically ought to determine strategy in the second half, the job is simply too big and complicated for anything like a traditional commander. The fact is it has all been worked out on paper and turned into software called the Single Integrated Operating Plan, or SIOP for short. What the plan is we don't know, but it has been programmed into a computer in the headquarters of the Strategic Air Command deep underground near Omaha, Nebraska. In the event of a major attack—that is, in the event various sensing systems pick up the launch of many missiles and feed the information to SAC's computer—SIOP will go into effect.

This makes sense, but it also raises questions about computer reliability. Programmers make mistakes and computers do too, sometimes of an eerie, other-worldly kind. Not long ago—on the morning of Friday, November 9—a computer made a mistake at the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD) headquarters in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The cause of the mistake is unclear, because the Pentagon isn't telling. It was described as a "mechanical error," which suggests that somebody pushed button "A" instead of button "B." The effect, at any rate, was to feed information from a routine war-game tape into NORAD's computer in such a way that the computer thought a Russian submarine in the North Pacific had launched a handful of missiles toward the United States. Of course the computer sounded the alert, jet interceptors scrambled in the United States and Canada, and the men deep underground at Minuteman control panels had an anxious few minutes wondering if the moment had arrived to turn the brass key. But that's as far as it went; there are many safeguards against this and other possible errors and within six minutes, according to the Pentagon, the NORAD computer was pacified. Whether SAC's computer was prodded to the ready with SIOP we do not know.

The fear of an accidental war runs deep, with good reason. Reaction time is so short there is little margin for error. The United States has so far resisted a policy of launch on warning, despite its obvious military advantages, precisely because it increases the danger of accidents, as well as the danger of miscalculation. "Mechanical error" is far from being the only possible sort. What if a sizable chunk of nickel-iron from deep space should land on downtown Washington some hot August night? An eon ago a meteorite perhaps fifty feet in diameter left a crater the best part of a mile wide in Arizona, and something devastated a large corner of Siberia back in 1907. An ordinary pair of binoculars will show you what meteorites have done to the moon. Would a similar catastrophe on earth trigger a spastic nuclear reaction?

The answer is no. The Pentagon has thought about this a good deal—one hopes the Russians have, too—and there is very little chance of anything except a nuclear attack being perceived and responded to as a nuclear attack. But the public is hard to reassure on this point,

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and it is quick to fear that things might somehow slip out of control.

A vivid image sticks with me from a movie of the early 1960s called *Failsafe*. The word "failsafe" refers to the military command and control procedures which are intended to prevent a nuclear war from starting by accident. In the film a nuclear alert was triggered by something trivial and unexpected—a flight of geese, weird atmospheric effects over the Arctic, something of the sort—and a flight of B-52s carrying bombs was routinely started on its way to Russia. As soon as the initial error was identified an order went out telling the B-52s to head for home, which they all did, with one exception. As President Kennedy said during the Cuban Missile Crisis, "There's always some SOB who doesn't get the message."

The crew of the lone B-52, convinced that at last push had come to shove, was determined to do its duty. An ordinary crew of American boys, half cowboy and half bank clerk, determined to do and die because there would be nothing to come home to anyway. A squadron of U.S. fighter planes was sent after the B-52 over the Arctic, but they were too late, and one by one they ran out of fuel and nosed down in strange silence toward the pack ice. That's the image which sticks with me. It was an awful cinematic moment, when you realized nothing could be done. The Air Force protested the movie on the grounds things didn't work that way, the B-52s required a positive go order and would automatically turn back without it, but that didn't detract one whit from *Failsafe*'s impact.

A similar catastrophic accident was at the heart of Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove*. There a loony Air Force general named Jack D. Ripper, convinced the Russians were poisoning the American water supply, ordered the planes aloft and Slim Pickens rode the fatal bomb out the bomb-bay door as if it were a Brahma bull. Of course Kubrick was pushing things farther than they are ever likely to go, but a residual popular distrust of the political sophistication of generals lingers all the same. Those rigid men with their crewcuts and knifeslash mouths and narrow-eyed suspicion of the Russkies seem frail vessels for the awful authority of the bomb. The Pentagon may protest all it likes that no general or admiral has any such authority, but the truth is they have something close to it, and respected civilian strategists have worried that some brigade commander in Germany, or some Naval captain in a Trident submarine off Vladivostock, might take it into his mind to stand up straight and let 'em have it, because he thought the president was caving in. Sentiments of that sort, at any rate, are not hard to find, and technical considerations necessarily reserve a certain autonomy for the men in control of submarine-launched missiles and tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. Such a commander would have to be pretty determined to push through a successful launch on his own say-so, but, in theory at least, he *could* do it.

Other fears of accidental war center on the strategems of terrorists or provocateurs, who might choose to trigger a war for their own purposes. The apparent detonation of a nuclear device by an unknown party off the coast of South Africa last month only emphasizes the difficulty of keeping track of something which might fit comfortably into a steamer trunk. Earlier this year China invaded Vietnam despite stern warnings from Moscow. It is not inconceivable that Moscow might have followed its warnings with action, and that China might have found itself at war with Russia. In such a situation China would hope to get us involved, and we would hope to stay out of it. What better way to force our hand than to simulate a Russian attack on the United States? It sounds far-fetched but it *could* happen. People in the Pentagon worry about such possibilities, and over the years have developed means of establishing whether sudden local disasters are *nuclear* disasters, and what caused them. In the event we couldn't pinpoint the source we would probably just sit tight, jittery and alert, and wait to see what happened next. Presumably the Russians would do the same. The consequences of impetuosity are too great for any other approach.

Worrying about accidental war makes sense, but it tends to obscure the much greater likelihood of a war beginning in the traditional manner, as the result of a political crisis which no one could find a way to settle. I can't think of a single war which has begun as the result of a genuine accident. Military commanders at sea, or in garrison on distant borders, have always exercised a great deal of local discretion, but I can't think of one who has slipped his mooring and successfully pushed his country into war. Nations often go to war against their better judgment, or with lightheaded disdain for the consequences, but that is not what we mean by accidental. No one wanted war in August, 1914, unless it was a handful of Serbian nationalists, but the Great Powers went ahead anyway, when they might have gone back. Even the Second World War was backed into; Hitler was apparently no less surprised by Britain's declaration of war in defense of Poland than Britain was herself. Genuinely deliberate wars seem to be limited to the attack on weak powers by strong powers—Japan's invasion of Manchuria, say, or Italy's of Ethiopia. Generally, Great Powers go to war because they've got themselves in a pickle.

This fact suggests that the extravagant worry over accidental war is really only a kind of flinching. Relations between the United States and the Soviet Union are conducted by traditional diplomacy. Both sides have been sober and cautious, for the most part, but they have found no way to deal with each other but by military gesture, political alliance and verbal warning. It has worked so far, but it is no different from the methods used to maintain the peace during the first half of the century. No one seems able to think of a better approach. It is not clear, in fact, that anyone in a position of power is even trying. The international system, in short, is inherently no more stable than it has been at any other time in the last century or two. Brezhnev is no Hitler, but neither was Kaiser Wilhelm. Worry about accidental war—and we are bound to hear more of it following the recent NORAD computer mishap—is beside the point, because it does not address the real cause of wars, which is not the blind working of fate, but the myopic working of men with arms. THOMAS POWERS

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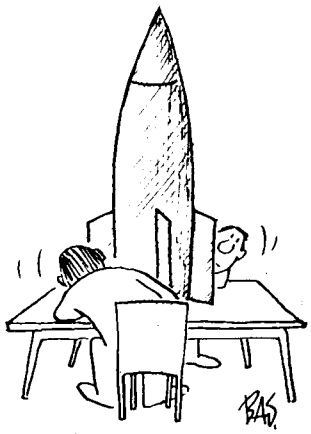
THE DENUCLEARIZATION OF CONFLICT CANNOT BE TOTAL



Below the SALT . . . some ethical dilemmas

JOHN LANGAN

AT THREE MILE ISLAND the American public received a dramatic reminder of some of the risks involved in relying on nuclear sources for energy. The developing debate on ratification of the SALT II agreement will bring to our attention the risks involved in relying on nuclear sources for security.

In both cases, we are likely to conclude that we have no real alternative but that our situation remains perilous and unsatisfactory. In both cases, it is also likely that a vocal and dedicated minority of critics will conclude that existing patterns of reliance on the atom are morally unsatisfactory and will lead to catastrophe. In offering these reflections on the SALT debate, I should make it clear that I agree with the critics of SALT II on the left that the current situation of the world and of the United States with regard to nuclear weapons is dangerous and may result in irreparable disaster to our civilization. The development of new weapons systems at great expense, the continued deployment of vast arrays of weapons of mass destruction on land, under the seas and in the air, the likelihood of nuclear proliferation in areas of the world already riven by murderous strife—all these things present a terrifying prospect for the future of humanity.

They provoke us to say that what is simply ought not to be. They may also provoke us to substitute moral revulsion and outrage for a careful assessment of the situation and of the variety of ways in which humanity has dealt with it so far and may deal with it in the future. The following reflections are offered not so much as an argument for one side in the current debate as a set of considerations that are prior to making moral judgments about the proposed treaty or about America's nuclear posture in general.

It is a noteworthy fact that warnings of nuclear catastrophe, though not easy to refute, have been largely ineffective in persuading the major powers of the world to give up their reliance on nuclear weapons. There are, I would suggest, four main explanations for this.

The first is psychological—the general human tendency to ignore those dangers that we seem to be unable or unwilling to do much about. For this reason, approaches to disarmament that stress the terrors of nuclear war may be counterproductive, for they produce a strong desire not to think at all about such disagreeable possibilities.

The second is the nature of the weapons systems themselves, which are deployed out of sight and largely out of mind. No mass mobilizations and no extensive expeditionary forces are needed in an age when lethal missiles can be launched from the depths of the Pacific or from under the fields of North Dakota. Nuclear deterrence is not an onerous method of national defense for the civilian population. Nor is it particularly expensive, at least when we look at it in comparison with the total national budget or in comparison with the cost and effort required to achieve victory in the earlier wars of this century. Even so expensive a weapons system as the MX, which is estimated to cost thirty billion dollars, will probably never take as much as 1 percent of the gross national product. Nuclear deterrence permits most of us to go about our business without turning the country into an armed camp or imposing a crushing financial burden. If it did not, it would be much more unpopular than it is.

The third factor in our reluctance to respond to the dangers involved in basing our national security on the nuclear deterrent is the historical fact that nuclear weapons, however many difficult moral questions they may raise, are contemporary instruments of national self-defense. They serve what has almost universally been taken to be one of the essential and legitimate functions of the state. So far, at any rate, they have not fallen into the hands of terrorist groups or private organizations. The patterns of their development and deployment have been even marked by traditional service rivalries. Nuclear weapons derive a certain initial legitimacy from their employment by the state. For some radical critics, of course, this close connection between the state and nuclear weapons points to another conclusion, namely, the denial of moral legitimacy to

FATHER JOHN LANGAN, S.J., *is a research associate of the Woodstock Theological Center at Georgetown University.*

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any state that relies on nuclear weapons for its defense.

The fourth factor that has soothed popular apprehensions about the reliance of the superpowers on nuclear weapons is the very important fact that the balance of terror has thus far proved to be stable. The United States and the Soviet Union have avoided major wars, both nuclear and conventional, even while they went through periods of cold war and moments of crisis. Even though both powers committed enormous resources to weapons technology over the years, they have not been anxious to prove the effectiveness of their weapons systems under war conditions. For thirty-four years neither territorial threats nor ideological antipathy have been sufficiently powerful to overcome the rational caution inspired by the awesome weapons held by the other side. Confrontations have certainly occurred, the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 being the central and classic case. SALT I gave the stability of mutual deterrence official recognition; and the United States under the Nixon-Ford-Kissinger regime accepted the limited goal of a sufficiency of nuclear weapons and a situation of rough strategic parity with the Soviet Union. The preservation of stability in the strategic balance and the importance of avoiding policies and initiatives that would be destabilizing have become cardinal considerations in the development of superpower nuclear policy.

A good argument can be made to the effect that without the presence of nuclear weapons on both sides and without the restraints on political and military ventures that these weapons brought with them, the hostility and mutual distrust between the United States and the Soviet Union would at some moment of crisis have produced a bloody conventional war, probably fought out in Europe.

But so long as the massive arrays of nuclear weapons of the two superpowers are set against each other, the possibility of a catastrophic nuclear attack from one or both sides remains. This possibility obviously increases in times of acute political tension between the superpowers or of military conflict between their client states. Such an attack could reduce even the worst outcome of a nuclear reactor accident to the level of a freeway mishap. The general policy of the superpowers has been to reduce the likelihood of such a dire event by circumspection in their behavior in crisis situations, but not to eliminate the possibility in principle. In fact, the response of the Soviets to their enforced retreat in the Cuban missile crisis was a vast increase in their nuclear armaments.

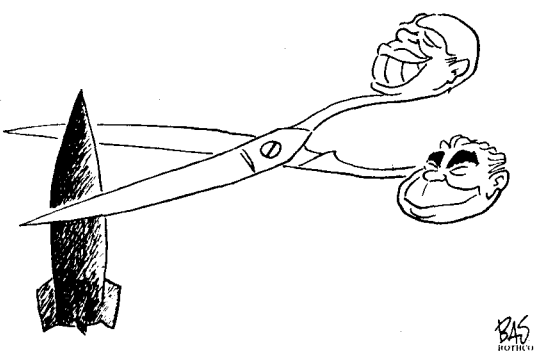
IT SEEMS CLEAR that neither superpower is seriously interested in the possibility of a radically denuclearized world. As a friend observed in a recent discussion, "A world without nuclear weapons would not be utopian; it would be chaotic." This judgment reflects the belief that the balance of nuclear power has contributed to the avoidance of major wars. It also reflects the uncertainty most strategic thinkers feel about how political conflict would be worked out in a world without nuclear weapons.

The continued existence of political conflicts likely to produce large-scale violence and the widespread availability of the technology and the materials required for producing nuclear weapons ensure that the fearsome possibility of the use of nuclear weapons is not one that can be simply eliminated from our world. The existence of a nuclear arsenal, whether under national or international control, as a means to deter states or other groups from deploying or using nuclear weapons, would remain a necessity even if the great bulk of existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons and delivery systems possessed by the present nuclear powers were to be destroyed at once.

Since Hiroshima we must live with the melancholy fact that nuclear technology has created possibilities of destruction and violence that will haunt humanity for the rest of its days. This point, however, does not diminish the importance of trying to reduce force levels and expenditures on arms and to lessen those political tensions that increase the likelihood of the use of nuclear weapons. The denuclearization of political conflict cannot be total; but even a partial denuclearization which preserved stability would be a great good well worth striving for.

Some critics of SALT II who would urge the development of massive new weapons systems and an even heavier reliance on nuclear forces in the assertion of American power around the world either lose sight of the risks of a catastrophic nuclear exchange or assume that the basic situation of mutual deterrence is so fundamentally stable that it can withstand the breakdown of disarmament negotiations, the stresses of a new round of arms development, and the aggressive posturing on both sides that would probably accompany these events. They may be right in these optimistic assumptions, since the prospect of massive nuclear exchanges is indeed terrible; but it is obvious that such a policy will put us in a period of increased danger and increased expense. It also puts off the task of constructing a security system which does not rely on weapons of mass destruction, a task which is necessary for the long-term survival of human civilization, until some imagined better time, a time when the present danger will have been replaced by we know not what. In the meantime, of course, the process of arms control begun in the Test Ban Treaty of 1963 and continued in SALT I will have been shown to be reversible; and the course of future arms control negotiations will have been made that much more difficult.

The loss of time involved in putting off the control of strategic arms to some hypothetically more favorable moment in the future also gives more room for the operation of the two most serious factors that threaten the stability of the present



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nuclear regime. The first of these is the feasibility of new technological breakthroughs. The possibility and the likely effect of such innovations are speculative matters that are disputed among strategic and technical experts. But the development of new technologies that would increase defensive capacities or that would make missile-carrying submarines more vulnerable are among the more likely possibilities. Whether anything currently contemplated would really overturn the basic situation of mutual deterrence is more doubtful. But it is clear that the allocation of greater resources to weapons research and the uninhibited development of new technologies would increase both the likelihood of destabilizing breakthroughs and the level of anxiety felt on both sides about such possibilities. It is one of the merits of SALT II that by restricting to one the number of new weapons systems that can be introduced during the life of the treaty, it begins the task of imposing qualitative restraints on the arms race.

Whether, from the standpoint of American security interests, this new system would be the MX or something else is a matter for professional assessment. But any system which aims to allow us both to reveal our land-based missile systems for inspection and to conceal them against a possible Soviet attack is bound to remain paradox-ridden and is likely to be too clever by half. Such schemes can end up by depriving us of the benefits of arms control such as lowered defense expenditures and an increased sense of mutual reliability, even while doing little to strengthen the security of the United States in the world today.

The other major factor making for an unstable nuclear order is the possibility of proliferation. The increasing availability of nuclear materials and expertise makes the option of at least a token nuclear force available to a fair number of nations. Local political conflicts or a collapse of confidence in the protective capacities of the present nuclear order may make it attractive for some nations to exercise that option. Optimists may hope that proliferation will issue in regional balances of terror. Nationalists may affirm that it is a manifestation of imperialist arrogance to believe that new members of the nuclear club will behave less responsibly than its current members and may claim that restrictions on the nuclear capacities of developing countries are an affront to their equal sovereignty. But it is obvious that extensive proliferation, particularly in such areas as the Middle East, will make a more dangerous world for all of us.

WHILE SALT II cannot by itself prevent proliferation, the breakdown of the arms control process between the superpowers would almost certainly be a contributory cause of future proliferation. This would be so for two reasons. First, the superpowers, as part of their efforts to promote widespread acceptance of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, committed themselves to enter negotiations leading to general and complete disarmament. Second, a buildup of nuclear arms after a breakdown of negotiations would encourage other nations to look to their own security in a similar way.

Putting off the task of arms control commits us to living with increased dangers and tensions for the foreseeable future. Focusing on the present danger presented by the Soviet Union can cause us to lose sight of the dangers that are inherent in our present situation of nuclear deterrence. The stability of this situation will be lessened by the likely course of events after the rejection of SALT II; and it can in a particular moment of crisis fail to hold. This last possibility is not one that most of us want to think about, and most theorists of deterrence have not thought it feasible to do more than to devise systems for accident prevention and crisis communication and to insist on the irrationality of actions that would lead to mutual destruction. But the danger of catastrophe remains as long as nuclear deterrent forces remain, and the danger increases as these forces are expanded and replaced by newer weapons. If we are fortunate, we may be jolted into an awareness of our danger by a warning like the Harrisburg nuclear accident which may serve to remind us of the vulnerability of our situation without inflicting devastating harm.

A point that radical critics of nuclear arms and of the SALT II agreement see more clearly than most is that a situation in which the dominant nations of the world stand poised to destroy each other totally is not, in the long run, a morally acceptable situation. It can be granted that a situation of stable deterrence has the advantage of making hostile and aggressive activity prohibitively dangerous and even fatal for the aggressor. It makes an all-out attack by one superpower against a vital interest of the other not merely unloving but also imprudent. Like a Hobbesian social contract and certain theories of the free market, deterrence enlists self-interest in the cause of restraint and virtue. This transformation is part of the intellectual appeal of theories of deterrence. But we should remember that the policy of deterrence is both expensive and dangerous. If it should prove unsuccessful, its collapse would plunge us into both suffering and doing enormous evils. Critics of current strategic assumptions and attitudes are right in urging that there must be a humane alternative basis for a peaceful and stable world order.

What they are probably not right on is their often-stated assumption that we can arrive at such a basis in a direct fashion that is simply the practical implementation of a basic moral conversion. The situation of mutual deterrence that the superpowers are currently in is a complex one: and extricating ourselves from it requires patience, ingenuity, and cooperation in addition to a basic conviction about the urgency of moving to a new situation.

THE COMPLEXITY of the situation of deterrence gives rise to numerous paradoxes, three of which may be mentioned as especially relevant to disarmament efforts. First, efforts to provide defense for one's own civilian population are seen as efforts to escape from the constraints of mutual deterrence; they can encourage the other side to contemplate new weapons systems. This point underlies both present claims about the destabilizing effects of Soviet civil defense systems and the decision made by both sides in SALT I not to develop comprehensive anti-ballistic missile systems. Second, developing

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and relying on nuclear weapons of limited destructiveness may increase both the likelihood that such weapons will be used and the likelihood that a general nuclear exchange would result from such use. Third, unilateral deep cuts in weapons systems or perceived inferiority in one's destructive potential may encourage the other side to aggressive actions which increase the likelihood of a general nuclear exchange. These paradoxes are hypothetical claims about adversary reactions in a future that is schematically indicated but not described in detail. They do not yield certain predictions about what will in fact happen if we develop defensive systems or if we make deep cuts in existing weapons systems. But they serve to remind us that initially attractive moves may have unsuspected consequences and that even in moving away from mutual deterrence, we may be exposing ourselves to new dangers.

In this century there have been two different routes to general war. The first is the route to World War I, the route of a military buildup and a naval arms race with complex relationships between dominant powers and allied client states. The second is the route to World War II, the route of concessions to dictatorial regimes and abortive efforts at disarmament. Both routes led to international catastrophe, and both provide warnings that participants in the current debate are fond of appealing to.

Historical analogies rarely settle arguments, since they are usually drawn to support a point already made and since contrary analogies can always be offered. But it is surely plausible to think that both routes, the route of increased armaments and the route of unilateral arms reductions, involve real dangers, given the nature and scope of the hostility and suspicion between the Soviet Union and the United States. This is not to claim that they are morally or politically equivalent. They are no more equivalent than fear and trust, than bellicosity and appeasement. It may be morally more creditable to err by making charitable and optimistic misjudgments about one's adversaries than by always believing the worst about their intentions. But the nature of the Soviet state and the character of its behavior even after the death of Stalin show that there is no moral merit in one-sided concessions that enhance its power or that reward its tendency to probe areas of Western weakness and indecisiveness.

The safest ways out of the morally perplexing situation of deterrence are those that the superpowers can travel together. Without the resolution of the political and ideological issues that divide the two giants, even well-intentioned unilateral efforts to achieve deep cuts in arms levels are destabilizing and are more likely to provoke truculence than imitation. The morally most significant cut, namely renouncing an assured capacity to destroy the other society, could be profoundly destabilizing. Measures short of that would be equivocal and could well increase the likelihood of nuclear war without significantly lessening its destructiveness. The situation of deterrence, while dangerous and morally inadequate, is a kind of temporary shelter from those forces that would otherwise lead the superpowers into war with each other. It should not be our lasting abode; but if humanity is not to be subjected to great risks for questionable benefits, the superpowers must move from this shelter together. It is my own belief that in the SALT II agreement, despite its many shortcomings, they are beginning to do so.

IT WILL TRANSMIT A SIGN OF WEAKNESS

SALT: the case against

JAMES F. REID

"WAR IS HELL!" This cliché has always been understood as a poetic way to describe the many different forms of horror that accompany war. But as applied to thermonuclear war it would be far closer to a description of the literal truth—for a country that was the target of a full-scale nuclear attack would know the kind of hitherto unexperienced fire, destruction and chaos that are the essence of the biblical imagery of hell.

And so it is most appropriate that we find leaders of all faiths calling on nations to halt the arms race, and prophesying that if mankind does not undergo conversion nuclear destruction could be the result.

Nonetheless, to conclude that the exhortations to peace of John Paul II and others necessitate support for any particular political agreement that goes by the name "arms control" would be to make a fundamental error. One could argue this way if the church had absolutely condemned the very possession of nuclear arms. But it has not done so. The final text of Vatican II's Pastoral Constitution *The Church in the Modern World* contains no explicit teaching on the morality of the possession of nuclear weapons. It does unequivocally condemn total war. ("Every act of war directed to the indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their inhabit-

JAMES F. REID *is an assistant professor of political science at the College of St. Thomas in Minnesota.*

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ants is a crime against God and man. . . .") But this document makes it clear that, even in the nuclear age, it is legitimate for a nation to pursue its interest. ("State leaders and all who share the burdens of public administration have the duty to defend the interests of their people and to conduct such matters with a deep sense of responsibility.") The Council even speaks of nuclear weapons as playing a positive role in this effort. ("Since the defensive strength of any nation is thought to depend on its capacity for immediate retaliation, the stockpiling of arms which grows from year to year serves . . . as a deterrent to potential attackers. Many people look upon this as the most effective way known at the present time for maintining some sort of peace among nations.") The Council is also quite clear in stating that an end to the arms race must be sought, but most importantly for my argument, states explicitly that disarmament must be mutual, not unilateral. (". . . All must work to put an end to the arms race and make a real beginning of disarmament, not unilaterally indeed but at an equal rate on all sides, on the basis of agreements and backed up by genuine and effective guarantees.")

And so SALT II must be judged on other grounds—grounds which include a consideration of the effect of ratifying the treaty on the legitimate interests of the United States, as well as a consideration of the role that it might play in reducing the destructiveness of a future war. My belief is that ratification of this treaty in the present political context would endanger the United States and, if anything, make an American-Soviet conflict more, not less likely. When we add to this the consideration that this treaty makes a very minimal contribution to arms control, the choice becomes as clear as choices in this realm can be: the Senate should engage in a principled and clearly explained rejection of this treaty.

To be able to judge whether or not ratification of SALT II would be in the interest of the United States, we need to look at it in the context of American-Soviet relations since SALT I was signed in 1972. That treaty was hailed in the same manner, interestingly, as SALT II has been—as putting a brake on the arms race. It froze at the number the offensive missiles each side then possessed; but because it placed no restrictions on qualitative improvements such as the MIRVing of missiles or improvements in missile accuracy it was referred to as an "Interim Agreement." A SALT II would be necessary.

SALT II has taken seven years to negotiate. Guidelines were agreed upon at Vladivostok in December 1974. Unlike SALT I these called for *some* qualitative limits. Each side would be limited to 2400 missiles plus bombers, and only 1320 of these delivery systems could be MIRVed. But negotiations throughout 1975 and 1976 were not able to produce a treaty from the guidelines.

When Jimmy Carter entered the White House in 1977 he decided that, rather than continue to pursue an agreement that would at most make a marginal contribution to the "braking" of the arms race, he would try for an agreement that would call a virtual halt to the race itself. His proposal of March 1977, if it had been accepted and translated into treaty form, might have done that. It called for more significant limits on the total

number of delivery vehicles and the number of them that could be MIRVed than were contained in the 1974 guidelines. It would have forbidden the modernization *or* replacement of ICBMs and the development and deployment of mobile ICBMs, and enforced this ban by limiting the flight-testing of ICBMs to six per year—a limit whose violation could be easily observed. And most importantly it called for a reduction from 308 to 150 in the number of Soviet very heavy ICBMs—the only weapons in their arsenal capable of giving them a first-strike counterforce capability. The Soviet reaction to this proposal provides the most important piece of evidence for my interpretation of their behavior. The Soviet reaction was to reject the new framework out of hand. The message was clear—the only course acceptable to the Soviets was to continue to plod ahead on the basis of the 1974 guidelines. And so, after two more years of plodding we have arrived at SALT II.

It is impossible to engage here in a detailed analysis of this complex treaty. Fortunately, it is not necessary to do so, because what the treaty does and does not do is largely agreed upon. The treaty does place limits on some escalations of the arms race that the superpowers could *theoretically* engage in, and in that sense it could be said to have a braking effect. For example, the treaty prevents the deployment of ground or sea-launched cruise missiles with a range over 600 kilometers, and bans weapons of mass destruction on the seabed. And its most important provisions incorporate the Vladivostok limits and supplement them by banning any increase in ICBM size or the number of warheads that they currently carry. But the treaty does not stop the arms race. There is no limit on improvements in the accuracy of ballistic missiles; and because there is no limit on the number of tests of ballistic missiles, doubt has arisen as to the treaty's verifiability. But even accepting the view that the treaty creates a limited freeze on weapons development, a severe problem remains. Because the treaty places no limits on the number of very heavy Soviet ICBMs, the status quo that is frozen is one that is inherently unequal. For while we were talking and voluntarily limiting our arms buildup, the Soviets were building weapons of such destructive power (the SS-18s) that when, in short order, they become only a little more accurate they will be able to destroy ninety percent of our land-based ICBMs, while we will have no such first-strike counterforce ability relative to their missiles.

During the seven-year SALT negotiations both the Soviets

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and the Americans were continuing the arms buildup, but that is where the similarity ends. While the United States was delaying or canceling such weapons systems as the B-1 bomber, the MX mobile missile, the Trident submarine, and the neutron bomb in order either to "not poison the SALT process" or to avoid wasting money on systems which SALT II would presumably make unnecessary, the Soviets were going full speed ahead. Most significantly, in an action which can have no justification in the context of a defense-deterrence strategy, they have developed the SS-18 as a counterforce weapon as described above.

THE UNITED STATES has been snookered. It seems to me that the only people who could deny this are those that believe that the leaders of "imperialist" America are the only ones capable of international manipulation for selfish purposes. Soviet political writings state quite openly that their notion of detente is not that it is a means to peace, but rather a *relatively* peaceful means to an increase in Soviet/socialist influence. And we find a clear parallel in their stated view of negotiations. Negotiations are not to be conducted to end a war or resolve other conflict situations. They may eventually result in that, but their purpose is to weaken the enemy, to cause him to slacken his efforts. Our failure to take a similarly political approach to the SALT negotiations has allowed the Soviets to attain the superiority they now possess.

There are aspects of recent American-Soviet relations other than arms limitations negotiations that are relevant as contextual considerations for SALT II. There is the fact that the Soviets have continued their efforts to destabilize various areas contrary to our interests and the interest of peace. They have stimulated the Middle East War of 1973; encouraged the North Vietnamese in violating the 1973 Peace Accords resulting in the "loss" of Vietnam; supported Communist activity in Portugal (a NATO country); are responsible for Cuban intervention in Africa and the Middle East; and have been partly responsible for a reduction of American power and influence in the crucial Middle East-Persian Gulf region. It is unwise to become alarmist about the extent of the compromising of the American position in the world. What troubles many even more than the "tally sheet," however, is that the United States has (particularly under our current weak president, who just might be president through 1984) telegraphed the message that we are unwilling to take action to prevent future Soviet moves that could be far more dangerous than anything we have seen to this point. The kind of response to danger that we seem to be in the habit of making is symbolized by President Carter's sending of an aircraft carrier from the Far East to the Persian Gulf area at the height of the Iranian crisis as a show of strength, and then the canceling of the order when it was halfway there; the attempt to quiet Saudi Arabian concern about our non-support of the Shah by sending a contingent of F-15s on a visit to their capital, unarmed; and ultimately by the tepid nature of the president's response to the Soviet presence in Cuba—a response that was not inherently weak but that was clearly insufficient in relation to the importance previously attached to that presence. My basic argument is that the ratification of SALT II would constitute a meek acceptance of the counterforce advantage which the treaty allows to the Soviets, and that they would perceive this acceptance of inequality in the context of other acts of presidential weakness—as proof of a national lack of will to resist.

But what difference does all this make? What about overkill? Isn't the fact that we have the ability to destroy the Soviet Union many times over and that they have the same ability versus us all that matters? I never cease to be amazed at the number of otherwise intelligent people that make this claim, for it is certainly false.

There are two factors at work in successful nuclear deterrence. Certainly we must have sufficient nuclear strength so that we have the ability to wreak destruction on the Soviets should they attack us. But more importantly, we must take great care that they perceive us as being willing to use the horrible force we possess should it become necessary. When I first present this need to my students, the typical response is to ask how the Soviets could possibly doubt our response should we be attacked. But when, as now, they have the ability to destroy our land-based ICBM force in a first strike, they might well doubt our response in the case of an attack targeted only on that force. Should this Soviet first strike take place, we would face the choice of acceding to the attack, with all that that would imply, or unleashing our bombers and sea-launched missiles on the cities of the Soviet Union, with the certainty of having our cities destroyed in return. I find it hard to imagine that an American president would make the latter choice. Fortunately, it appears likely that, at this time at least, the Soviets have sufficient doubt as to the choice we would make as not to make the attempt. The real danger is that our certification of this imbalance would be one more sign of weakness which could very easily create a perception of our will power sufficient to tempt them to aggression in Europe or the oil-rich Persian Gulf, for example.

To appreciate the very real danger I am talking about we need only learn the lesson of the Cuban Missile Crisis. No event of this significance is interpreted in the same manner by all historians. But among those who assume that the Soviet introduction of nuclear weapons into Cuba in 1962 was a rational act there is much agreement on the cause of that action. The benefits to be gained from getting away with such an act were significant. In a purely military sense the Soviets would have been able to have their intermediate range missiles function as ICBMs by means of their location. And unquestionably the very fact of American acceptance of this act would have greatly reduced our power and influence in Europe and elsewhere.

But what led the Soviets to the decision to go ahead? Surely they must have known we could not afford to let this act go unchallenged—for the very reason that it would have the effect that I have described. It was clear, however, that they had sufficient doubt of our willingness to respond forcefully to make the attempt. (Graham Allison's review of the evidence and of other commentaries in his classic *Essence of Decision:*

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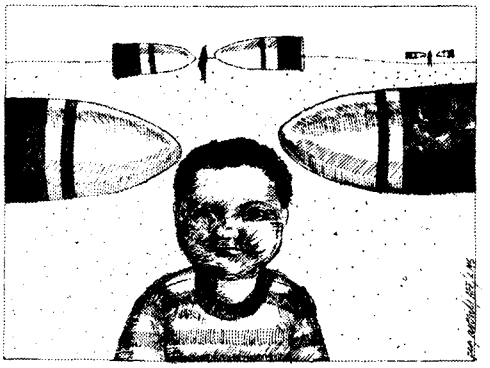
Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1971) gives credence to my interpretation, in particular, his pp. 50-56. John Spanier, in his *American Foreign Policy Since World War II*, 7th ed. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977), pp. 150-55, argues even more specifically as I do.)

As it turned out, the Soviets were guilty of a serious misperception. Their error in judgment brought the world closer than it has ever been to the brink of nuclear war, as President Kennedy blockaded Cuba so no more missiles could enter, and threatened war if those that were already there were not removed.

But what led them to their misperception? Clearly it was our words and actions, or more specifically the words and actions of President Kennedy that gave them false hope. The chief action that was responsible for their misperception was our inaction or lack of effective action at the time of the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961. The invasion was obviously American-instigated. Yet when it faced failure, we decided to let it fail. The message here was that our president was weak-willed enough to fail to do what was necessary to achieve a major natural objective, so weak-willed that he would not follow through when we were already committed—when our prestige was on the line. The contrast to the Soviets very different response to trouble in their sphere of influence—in Hungary in 1956—must have been particularly compelling. Yes, the image of JFK must have been of a president to whom peace was a greater objective than national security. Some of his speeches (as is the case with the speeches of all modern American presidents) could certainly have been interpreted that way. In addition to his inaction with reference to Cuba in 1961, his failure to do more than to protest the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961—a serious violation of the Four Power Accords—could have been interpreted that way. And when Khrushchev met JFK face-to-face at the Vienna Summit Conference, he confirmed in his own mind all of his impressions of the man's weakness. As it turned out, his impressions were misimpressions, but people and nations act on the basis of impressions and perceptions not on the basis of "objective reality."

THE COUNTERFORCE capability the Soviets have relative to our land-based ICBMs is an element of significant military imbalance, whether it is likely to be exploited directly or not. Ratification of SALT II means acceptance of this imbalance and is thus a sign of weakness, and in the context of Carter's other gaffes and the post-1972 trend referred to above, it could be the fatal one. What would we do if Soviet perception of our weakness led them to seize the Iranian oilfields? We don't currently have the theater capability to resist such an effort. Would we bomb Moscow?



But they wouldn't do anything that dangerous, would they? Was the introduction of missiles into Cuba, considering the theater and strategic nuclear superiority we had, much less dangerous?

No. I am not engaging in science fiction here. The Soviets will have the military superiority I have referred to very shortly. Only in the 1990s will our ICBMs again become invulnerable with the MX system. Yet the Soviets' long-term future, as George Will points out, "is clouded by economic stagnation, the diminishing appeal of the state ideology . . . and, of course, China." He joins Edward Luttwak in concluding that "the result is a fatal combination of operational optimism in the near term . . . with strategic pessimism for the long term." As a result, the Soviet leadership will be "under a powerful pressure to exploit its 'window' of military advantage in the 1980s, in order to avert the bleak future awaiting it in the 1990s."

Senate ratification of this radically unequal treaty will transmit a signal of weakness. I have given reasons to suggest that the Soviets are in a condition where they could be easily tempted to rash action. And so we have the strange case of an arms control treaty which could easily have a greater chance of causing war than securing peace.

But how can we, as Christians, be against an arms control treaty? It would be hard to be against a real arms control treaty, but this treaty makes such a slight contribution to arms control that it is easy to justify trading off the slight controlling effect it might have in light of the dangers of ratification as I have outlined them.

Every supporter of this treaty I have come across concedes that it does little for arms control by itself. The chief reason for supporting it seems to be that it is an intrinsic part of a mystical "SALT process" which will be endangered if this treaty is rejected. I find it hard to fathom this notion. The claim seems to be that any hiatus in arms control talks between the superpowers would be *per se* disastrous. But why? They know how our system works. Without Senate ratification there is no treaty. If they are serious about arms control they will consent to resume negotiations on a new basis, such as Carter's 1977 proposals. If they aren't serious about arms control, that would be tragic. But there is little that we can do about it directly.

But it is not enough for the Senate to reject this treaty. Their rejection must be a principled one. This can best be accomplished, it would seem to me, not by attaching reservations or amendments which would cause the Soviets to reject the treaty, but by a simple "no" vote. A change in the treaty by the Senate could have the worst possible result—a resumption of more elongated negotiations that would be futile attempts to salvage a flawed treaty and would tempt our president to further unilateral acts of restraint. A "no" vote accompanied by a statement of principles by those so voting, or to be

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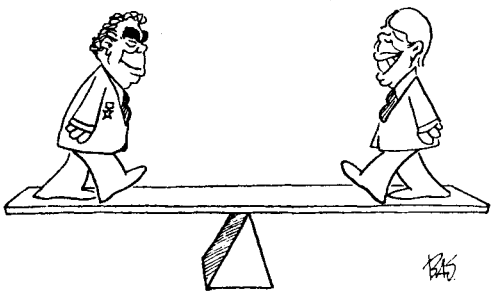
followed immediately by an explanatory resolution would be preferable. The point to be made, again, would be that we cannot accept a treaty which allows the Soviets weapons which enable them to threaten a significant element of our deterrent force, but that we are ready to enter into serious negotiations as soon as they indicate a willingness to abandon such weapons, and such a strategy. The U.S. Senate, in other words, must tell our president that his instincts as of 1977 were right. It must do for him what he didn't have the courage to do for himself.

Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger once observed, "Whenever peace—conceived as the avoidance of war—has been the primary objective of a power . . . the international system has been at the mercy of the most ruthless member of the international community." Christian social teaching demands that peace be an important objective of states. It does not demand that it be the only objective, even in the nuclear era. It does not claim that the existence of nuclear weapons negates the long-declared right of states to act for their own defense. Neither in previous eras or now does it demand that we put ourselves at the mercy of the ruthless.



IS REJECTION REALLY POSSIBLE?

SALT: a Pacific view

STEPHEN A. GARRETT

WE ARE NOW in the midst of one of the most seminal foreign policy debates of the century. The issue of whether the SALT II accords should be ratified by the Senate occupies center stage, not only in the Senate itself but to a considerable degree in the country as a whole. It is perhaps inevitable that the SALT debate as conducted in the United States so far has been rather ethnocentric, as if the one issue that really mattered was how SALT II would affect the overall American position vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. In reality, of course, the SALT negotiations impact to a greater or lesser degree on every nation in the global system. If the treaty, for instance, helps to reduce the danger of general nuclear war, this is of interest to all.

With the possible exception of discussion of our NATO allies and the People's Republic of China, however, there has been relatively little written in this country as to how other nations of importance to the United States actually view the SALT II treaty. During a recent tour of the Philippines, Indonesia, Australia, and New Zealand I had occasion to lecture on security matters generally and SALT more specifically before a wide variety of audiences (the lectures were sponsored by the United States International Communication Agency). Participating in these sessions were high-ranking military officers, members of Parliament, foreign ministry officials, journalists, and academics as well as simply what might be called "concerned citizens." In the questions that developed during the lecture period and in informal discussions afterwards I was presented with an interesting and in some ways strikingly different perspective on SALT from that which we may have in the United States. This perspective might be considered particularly instructive since three out of the four countries visited are formal allies of the United States and the other, Indonesia, currently maintains fairly close relations with Washington even in the absence of formal security ties.

Several points stand out. With very few exceptions there was strong support for American attempts at achieving a strategic arms control agreement with the Soviet Union. SALT II specifically received a virtually unanimous vote of confidence. The attitude was that it might not be a panacea for all the world's ills, but it was certainly better than nothing. Moreover, unlike the stance taken by many in the United States, there was a propensity to accept almost as a matter of faith that the Carter administration would not have agreed to SALT II unless it was convinced that it was a reasonable agreement and more specifically was verifiable.

This support for SALT II, however, seemed at times to be somewhat ritualistic, rather like an expression of confidence in motherhood and apple pie. The fact is that audiences in all four countries clearly felt themselves to be almost totally irrelevant to the actual SALT process. The attitude expressed might be summarized as follows: "Certainly we know that controlling nuclear arms is important. On the other hand as a practical matter we know that the Americans and Russians are basically concerned with each other and aren't much interested in our opinions or needs. All we can hope is that Carter knows what he's doing. Even if he doesn't, there's not much we could do about it." This somewhat melancholy approach was perhaps best caught in a question raised by a Liberal Party M.P. in Melbourne who asked what role Australia had played in the SALT negotiations. When I answered candidly that I wasn't aware of any significant role, he nodded and smiled a bit cynically, evidently anticipating that would be the answer.

The SALT talks then are in effect something of an abstrac-

STEPHEN A. GARRETT *is Director of International Policy Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies in California.*

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tion for these countries. How abstract they are was brought home by the rather surprising lack of basic knowledge about the strategic nuclear balance between the United States and the Soviet Union and especially the actual terms of the SALT II accord. With the exception of a group of academic strategic analysts at Australian National University, and another group from the New Zealand Defense Ministry, there was little awareness of just how awesome the nuclear arms situation really has become. One experience stands out. Speaking before a very able group of faculty and students at Monash University in Canberra, I went through a short summary of warheads, megatonnage, throw-weight, strategic launchers and so forth in the arsenals of two superpowers. The reaction was stunned silence and expressions of disbelief. Maybe this should not be a matter of surprise. There probably aren't that many Americans who really understand the enormous destructive power on which SALT II is designed to place some curbs. But the point is that there may be even less comprehension of the nuclear realities amongst those who because of their close ties to the United States stand to be heavily affected by Soviet and American decisions on nuclear weapons.

GIVEN THE FACT that SALT II is almost automatically accepted as a "good thing," any suggestion before these audiences that the treaty faced potential rejection in the United States Senate was greeted with something approaching shock. Indeed one impression emerging very strongly out of these sessions was that rejection by the Senate had hardly been considered as a possibility. A discussion of the intricate political background to the ratification debate, e.g., the awkward position of Senator Baker of Tennessee given his presidential ambitions, the fading clout generally of the Carter administration in Congress, was received in rapt attention, as if I were discussing the arcane behavioral patterns of some previously unknown tribe. There were frequent remonstrations that "of course" the Senate would eventually meet its responsibilities, but when I remained dubious about the prospects the astonishment was perceptible.

If the SALT talks are conceded to have general international importance, it still remains, of course, that for these countries their most immediate security concerns are often pretty far removed from the question of the Soviet-American strategic nuclear balance. The Filipinos worry about domestic insurgent movements and the implications for ASEAN and the Southeast Asian balance generally of recent Vietnamese military activity. The Indonesians express less concern about Hanoi. China remains the great actual or potential threat despite American-Chinese normalization. Both Australia and New Zealand are currently going through various degrees of agonizing reappraisal as to whether, given their meager resources, they can really make any significant contribution to their own defense.

For all four countries, moreover, there are two other concerns currently receiving much attention: the implications of a potential wider military role for Japan in the region (which some in the American government are pushing but which is understandably a sensitive matter for these peoples, given

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Japan's past record), and the potential threat a growing Soviet naval presence represents to shipping lanes in the Far East. Given the dependence of each country on trade, this is a genuinely worrisome matter and in fact is seen as much more of an immediate security problem than Moscow's vaunted nuclear might.

One impression garnered from these sessions that perhaps we in the United States ought to weigh is the uneasy feeling that to the extent the SALT talks succeed, the outlines of what has been called a Soviet-American "condominium" become more of a possibility. In other words, a world in which the superpowers solve their basic bilateral differences and in doing so tacitly agree on a diversion of power and influence throughout the rest of the globe. Even for staunch allies like the Filipinos or the Aussies such a prospect is regarded with considerable misgiving.

A directly opposite concern, on the other hand, is that the superpowers will *not* moderate their nuclear rivalry, thus making a future nuclear confrontation more likely. In these circumstances the issue becomes whether America's allies would want to be in the middle of the crunch. In both Australia and New Zealand today there are powerful forces on the left of the political spectrum who are arguing that the previous close security link with the United States ought to be modified to the extent that it involves the potential use of nuclear weapons to "protect" their country's national security. In New Zealand, for instance, a current *cause célèbre* is whether American nuclear-powered ships ought to be allowed into New Zealand ports (the controversy has been spurred by the Pentagon's admission it has restricted the entry of such ships into New York harbor). The Labor Party in New Zealand has in fact officially adopted a proposal to create a nuclear-free zone throughout the South Pacific, including New Zealand.

The ambiguity that one observes toward the American connection even as there is general support for the SALT treaty was perhaps symbolized by the comment of one crusty old Labor Party dowager in Melbourne. She asked whether the OMEGA site was relevant to the verification of SALT. OMEGA is a communications and satellite-tracking station currently being constructed by the United States in central Australia. Many in the country oppose it vehemently because of their concern that it may involve Australia in some future Soviet-American confrontation, i.e., providing a target for an unfriendly Soviet missile. When I said I didn't think OMEGA had any relevance to SALT—which this lady strongly supported—she sighed contentedly and said, "Oh, good, then I can go on fighting like mad against their completing this thing." There was a lusty round of applause as she sat down.

SALT may present the American people with a lot of confusing aspects. The uncertainties and contradictory feelings about the Soviet-American nuclear arms rivalry, however, are not confined to our own shores.

ONE OF THE JUST

IN MEMORY OF MARY WIDMAN

MARY WIDMAN, founder of Martin de Porres House in Chicago, died a year ago, on Dec. 10, 1978 at age 77. To my knowledge, no one has published a tribute to her. Dorothy Day and Tom Sullivan of The Catholic Worker keep nudging me to put something down on paper about this unforgettable woman.

Mary Widman would be my nominee as one of the ten just men and women to save the proverbial city.

There she was in the 1940s—a white young woman, graduate of Rosary College and a Dominican tertiary who moved into a black neighborhood. She began Blessed Martin de Porres House on Fulton Street several blocks from the noisy Lake Street El. Dorothy Day recalls the broken glass on the street, and I have memories of a bleak, treeless, cheerless area.

Furnishings on Fulton Street were sparse, simple. I joined Margaret Blaser and Florence Weinfurter, two friends, in going there to house-sit while Mary and some other young women went off on a retreat. There was not a comfortable chair in the place, only straight-backed kitchen chairs. For a brief period, I came to Mary Widman's weekly on my day off from work, and served as a volunteer. But it was a short while. I visited the sick poor and tried to be helpful in other ways. But my enthusiasm flagged, the long trek to that depressing area from our apartment at 404 Evergreen was exhausting and I did not persevere.

Mary, however, did persevere for more than 30 years in her own quiet way. Martin de Porres House served as a catechetical center, a social center, an interracial center and an employment bureau. My contacts were mainly limited to the Fulton Street House. Somehow I did not get to the Washington Street place very often.

Mary Widman constantly endeavored to be useful to her neighbors in crisis. If a family was evicted, she offered shelter. If people were hungry, she brought food. If they needed clothes, she provided garments for them. She saw needs simply, clearly, and responded directly.

During the troubled sixties in Chicago, the Martin de Porres House group prayed and marched for interracial justice with Martin Luther King. My niece, Mary Heyrman Wechsler, and her brother, Mark Heyrman, were among Mary's volunteer workers one summer.

Mary was an unassuming woman. For those in need, she emulated Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, caring for the troubled and the sick. For the young women in the neigh-

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borhood and those who came to volunteer, she opened doors to the liturgy, to the spiritual life and to expanded horizons, new experiences.

She was obviously loved by her women neighbors because they made sacrifices and sponsored chicken suppers to raise a gift of money that sent Mary to Rome for the canonization of Martin de Porres.

Not all her neighborhood contacts were friendly. In the early days of Fulton Street, Mary was criminally assaulted by three young men. Undaunted, she continued her work. A lesser woman would have quit then and there. Mary understood the folly of the Cross and persevered to the end.

Mary was a liberated woman. She was a strong individual dedicated to interracial justice when that witness was not a popular topic with traditional Catholics. She was a single parent who adopted a small daughter who was black. She lived out her adult life as a white woman living by choice in a black neighborhood.

Here was a valiant woman who took seriously the obligation of Christians to love one another. Dorothy Day says she is praying to Mary Widman, and so am I.

We shall not see her like again.

NINA POLCYN MOORE

(Nina Polcyn Moore, originally with the Catholic Worker group in Milwaukee, for many years headed St. Benet's bookstore in Chicago.)

Screen

GILT BY ASSOCIATION

TAKING THINGS LITERALLY

AND BESIDES, Leon Edel is deceiving himself. In my last column, I was trying to undermine the authority with which Edel seems to speak when he praises the current film adaptation of Henry James's *The Europeans*. Since Edel is one of our leading James scholars, his approval has clout. But I suspect that what Edel really likes the movie for is its weakness. If you bring to the movie an intense and vivid experience of James's own writing, that experience easily overrides the movie itself. The movie acts as a neutral medium for a remembrance of the novel. Because the movie has this effect on anybody who is steeped in James, I think Edel deceives himself that somehow the film can represent the novel for the rest of us as well. It seems to be that ultimate compliment which movies can pay to literature: a literal adaptation.

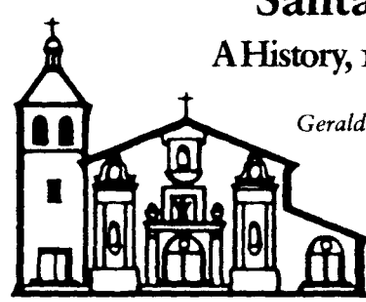
But there really is no such thing as a literal adaptation, for the mere difference in the two media changes whatever is adapted. If a movie doesn't transform adapted material on purpose, it will do so by chance, and badly. Most of the changes that director James Ivory and scriptwriter Ruth Prawer Jhabvala have made in *The Europeans* seem to be of the fussy sort. One scene has been added (a ball). Others have had to be cut. The proportions of certain roles have been altered. These are just, as the novel's own heroine might say in a teasing tone, "peccadillos." At worst they are supposed to be taken as the changes to which any filmmaker would have to resort in order to tell the novel's story. Yet they alter James considerably, as Mr. Edel would notice were he to pay more attention to the movie *per se*. Aping the precept for art that it should hold a mirror up to nature, Ivory's film holds a mirror up to James's novel. And like all mirrors, it gets everything backwards.

One reversal which occurs, for instance, is between the characters of the Baroness Eugenia (Lee Remick) and Lizzie Acton (Kristin Griffith). Lizzie is the sister of Robert Acton (Robin Ellis), a wealthy bachelor on whom Eugenia has designs. In Jhabvala's screenplay Lizzie is a more prominent character than in James's novel, where she remains indistinct and rather bland. Lizzie's role has been built up this way in order to provide an adversary for Eugenia and a sounding board for Robert's misgivings about her, which are revealed in the novel through the device films don't have of eavesdropping on someone's thoughts. But in the process, Lizzie takes on Eugenia's character. In the novel, Eugenia has great presence. She is not a pretty woman—in fact, a couple of characters

The University of Santa Clara

A History, 1851-1977

Gerald McKevitt, S.J.



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remark to themselves on her ugliness—but by her independence and the force of her personality, she is always the center of attention. In the film, Lizzie seems to have more this sort of character. Kristin Griffith, long-faced and freckled, is by nineteenth-century standards unattractive, but in the film she has been endowed with a sensible mind that compensates for her physical appearance.

Eugenia, on the other hand, is very beautiful in the movie since she is played by Lee Remick. But much of the character James gave her has disappeared. In order to give Eugenia some power equivalent to that she has in the novel, Ivory simply lets his camera gaze into Lee Remick's startling eyes at certain points. On a movie screen, this does indeed make Eugenia a rivetting presence. But it also alters the person in the novel. It replaces complexity with a kind of vacuity. It makes someone who is morally ambiguous in the novel into someone who is merely inscrutable. If we know Eugenia from the novel, Ivory's strategy allows us to impose her on the *tabula rasa* of Ms. Remick's performance. Otherwise, we are left with the impression that James's great heroine is some kind of bewitching nonentity.

Eugenia's character is one of the places where, as I was saying in my previous column, the films adapts the novel by stripping away its Jamesian qualities. Ivory's version of *The Europeans* removes Eugenia's inner conflicts the way furniture might be removed from a room. A consequence is that the film sympathizes with the American characters in a way that the novel does not. Working by simplification itself, the film seems to favor the moral simplicity of the New Englanders. Here again, the film gets James backwards. His sympathies are implied in the novel by that discrete irony which is the pinnacle of his writing style. This partisan irony is at work from the very beginning of the novel, where an inn that is "gloomy-looking" in one line is "the best hotel in the ancient city of Boston" a few lines further on. In seeing it this way, James assumes the dissatisfied attitude of his heroine, and he invites us to do likewise. In the absence of such irony, the movie offers us the one thing James's writing never encourages, nostalgia for the good old days.

James never finds his characters quaint. He takes their feelings seriously. He makes us admit to the existence of feeling in an age which prides itself on decorum and concealment. This is not the spirit of Ivory's film. In it the relations between the characters do have a certain quaintness to them. We are tacitly expected to find these people and their society and even their problems wonderful, because the problems are so much less vexing than those we have today. If only we too could spend all our time, the film seems to say, worrying about such fine moral points and subtle shades of emotion. Movies that have this patronizing, curiously smug attitude toward classic fiction seem to have come into being with the movie of *Tom Jones*. *Tom Jones* was released during the height of the Kennedy era, when we first began to realize that all was not right with our world. The movie was a huge commercial success because it happened to satisfy a new desire to excuse the failure of the present by seeing the past as easier, simpler, more limited. The precedent *Tom Jones* set remains in effect in *The Europeans*.

In soliciting Leon Edel's endorsement of their movie, the one claim Ivory and Jhabvala have made for it is the faithfulness to the novel. They have made that the sole standard by which they want the movie judged. But it is on precisely those grounds that the movie fails. If Edel imagines that the film is going to increase appreciation of James, he is mistaken. There's a Catch-22 in his esteem for the film, for it presupposes familiarity with the literature the film would transmit. By trying to be deferential, the film vitiates James, and it vitiates film art as well. *The Europeans* offers us the worst of both worlds, not a world better than our own.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

Books: CRITICS' CHRISTMAS CHOICES

Harvey Cox

TOWARD the end of some years in the past I might have been hard put to name the single best book I had read all that year. This year there is no doubt whatever. *A Voice from the Chorus* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux $10, 352 pp.) by Abram Tertz (Andrei Sinyavsky) will undoubtedly remain one of my favorites for a long time. The "chorus" in his title are the snatches of conversation, epithets, curses and elliptical outbursts that came from his fellow prisoners during the years he lived with them in the crowded barracks of a forced labor camp in the USSR. The "voice" is Sinyavsky's, sometimes in the form of portions of his letters to his wife, interspersed in the chorus. One might assume the author's discerning thoughts on art, literature, religion (he is a profound Christian) and sex might make the chorus sound cheap by contrast, but they do not. The juxtaposition gives the whole book a fleshy, meat-and potatoes realism that makes its spiritual quality even more luminescent. Apparently throughout his imprisonment Sinyavsky carried a copy of the Book of Revelation from the New Testament in his boot. It is fitting. His writing has the apocalyptic quality of St. John's visions on Patmos presented with the sweat and grime that must have ground its way into the pages before his release. Sinyavsky especially loved the Christian sectarians in his prison, the Pentecostals and Old Believers. He seems to think they were onto something he would also have liked to experience. Not at all the testimony of an embittered

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ex-prisoner, Sinyavsky avoids the cynicism of Solzhenitsyn and writes with a wild kind of humor.

Far scarier than any vampire movie is William Shawcross's *Sideshow* (Simon and Schuster, $13.95, 467 pp.), subtitled "Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia." The fruit of three years of careful research, this scrupulously documented record makes me wonder why Nixon and Kissinger are not standing trial at this very moment for their blatant violation of the Constitution. No wonder Kissinger is wildly angry about this book. How could anyone read it and still accept his word or his expertise about anything? In some ways the Cambodia sideshow, for which the people of Cambodia are now paying such a gruesome price, was a crime much worse in scale and destructiveness than the Watergate break-in. And the cover-up was even more elaborate. But so far it has gone unpunished, even largely undiscussed.

Praise the Lord for Orbis! They keep turning out title after title in theology focusing especially on the contribution of the non-Western world. In recent months I have read John Sobrino's *Christology at the Crossroads* (Orbis, $12.95, 432 pp.), although it appeared in 1978. Of all the works in the recent wave of brilliant Latin American theology, this is one of the finest. Sobrino is rooted in the struggle of the Latin American people, and at the same time he is so well trained in current European theology that his masterful arguments simply cannot be ignored as merely the exotic outbursts of some regional enthusiasm. Perhaps Sobrino's main point is that the historical location of the questioner makes a big difference in what questions are put to Jesus Christ. He is against any abstract or falsely universal theories about a person who was after all a specific concrete human being who even in his own time was viewed in a variety of ways. Sobrino makes it clear that the imaginary interlocutor who resides in the heads of most First World theologians—the skeptical, doubt-ridden, mentally homeless "modern man"—is simply not the one who is asking the real Christological questions in most of the world today, and in Latin America in particular. Although Orbis has published a rich variety of things, in the field of Christology in particular I recommend Leonardo Buff's *Jesus Christ Liberator* ($9.95, 323 pp.) and Ignacio Ellacuria's *Freedom Made Flesh* ($8.95, 246 pp., $4.95 paper.). What is becoming increasingly clear is that Latin American Christians are not talking about some cheap politicization of Christianity but about a radically authentic recovering of the very heart of the Gospel, the good news of God's choice of the disinherited and broken-hearted as those in whom the Kingdom is appearing in history.

For a class I am teaching on religion and autobiography I picked up Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* (Vintage Paperback, $2.45, 243 pp.) and found it an absorbing, funny, depressing, skillfully written book. If the Chinese mind is a riddle wrapped in an enigma, then what is the mind of a Chinese American girl-becoming-woman, mashed between two cultures, her head swimming with mama's stories, her fantasies erupting, her rage barely under control? In some ways this book helped me understand two strange lands—China and the mind of a woman—just a tiny bit better.

Although embarassed to keep puffing my own publisher, they do deserve it with two other books I devoured this year. One is Peter Steinfels's very important *The Neoconservatives* (Simon and Schuster, $11.95, 355 pp.). I am a little annoyed at the way the reviews of this well researched and interestingly written book keep arguing about whether Kristol, Moynihan, Bell et al. are *really* "neo-" anything, and so on. The point is Steinfels has given us an invaluable summary of a powerful political philosophy and movement that can only be viewed as unwelcome and even dangerous to those of us who are committed to democracy and equality and who have some serious doubts about whether capitalism is compatible with either one. Also, there is *Women of Spirit* (Simon and Schuster, $5.95, 400 pp.), edited by Rosemary Reuther and Eleanor McLaughlin, an excellent book to put in the hands of people who still think that the demand of women for an equal opportunity to express their gifts in the church is something that recently emerged from a NOW convention. Unfortunately we have all been handed a history of Christianity squeezed through the wringer of a distorted patriarchal consciousness. Actually, as this book demonstrates, the history was both better and worse than we have been told. Women have been demeaned and discredited throughout the centuries of Christianity, and they have also fought and led and prophesied all the while too.

I admit with some embarrassment that I also vastly enjoyed reading *The World According to Garp* (Dutton, $10.95, 437 pp.), John Irving's raucous epic, which is either the best pro-feminist book yet by a man or else the worst piece of male chauvinist garbage turned out in eons. I still don't know which, and I notice that many women also find quite opposite meanings in it. Nonetheless, it does clarify and focus a powerful but diffuse feeling I have had ever since I became a parent, that having children makes us infinitely more vulnerable to the buffeting and bludgeoning of the furies than we would be if we were childless. Irving surfaces an awful lot of fantasies, some of them pretty grundgy, but what a story-teller!

Annie Dillard

I'VE BEEN reading at random and at whim, as usual. Besides some Dickens, Fuentes, and Updike, besides Paul Horgan's Richard novels and Anthony Powell's *A Dance to the Music of Time*, here are some of the books I've liked recently:

NEW FICTION: Kit Reed, *The Ballad of T. Rantula* (Little, Brown, $8.95) and *The Better Part* (Farrar, Straus).

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Rosellen Brown, *Tender Memories* (Knopf, $8.95).

Jayne Anne Phillips, *Black Tickets* (Delacorte Press/Seymour Lawrence, $8.95).

Mary Gordon, *Final Payments* (Random House, $8.95).

POETRY: John Engels, *Blood Mountain* (Pittsburgh).

Rosanne Coggeshall, *Hymn for Drum* (Louisiana, $9.95).

Fred Chappell, *River; Bloodfire;* and *Wind Mountain* (Louisiana, $3.95 each). Each of these volumes is a long poem and part of the longer poem which comprises the whole.

Steve Orlen, *Permission to Speak* (Wesleyan, $7.50).

Philip Booth, *Available Light* (Viking, $5.95).

Donald Hall, *Kicking the Leaves* (Harper, $4.95).

Coleman Barks, *New Words* (Sweetwater Press).

Rosellen Brown, *Cora Fry* (Norton, $7.95, $2.95 paper).

Paul Zimmer, *The Zimmer Poems* (Dryad Press, $8.95).

THEOLOGY: Frederick Buechner, *The Alphabet of Grace* (Seabury, $3.95). This is a perfectly structured work of art, a well-made exemplum of grace.

PHILOSOPHY: Norman Malcolm, *Memory and Mind* (Cornell, $12.50). A sober and witty treatment of the problem of memory which seems (I'm still reading it) to take off from Wittgenstein.

HISTORY: Johnny Carey, Cort Conley, and Ace Barton, *Snake River of Hells Canyon* (Backeddy Books, Cambridge, Idaho). This beautifully written history of the Snake River, its exploration and settlement, provides a thorough and scholarly addition to American frontier history; it is also great fun to read, full of vivid anecdotes and wonderful photographs.

John Chadwick, *The Decipherment of Linear B* (Cambeidge, $15.95, $4.95 paper). Details an exciting moment in the history of scholarship.

ANTHROPOLOGY: Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols* (Vintage, $1.95) and *Purity and Danger* (Routledge & Kegan, $5.25). If contemporary philosophy sometimes seems a little bare of ideas, it is always possible to turn to anthropological theory—to what Douglas calls "anthropology in a teacup." These books play with ideas—new ideas—and excite me about ideas in the way that great literary criticism does.

Sherry B. Ortner, *Sherpas Through Their Rituals* (Cambridge, $19.95, $5.25 paper). A very witty monograph.

John Pfeiffer, *The Emergence of Man* (Harper, $8.95 paper). This general work inspired me to read dozens of studies in prehistory; of all of them, this one remains the most interesting.

THE ARTS: Leonard Bernstein, *The Unanswered Question* (Schirmer, $20). Bernstein applies some simple aspects of Chomsky's transformational grammar to

the techniques of Mozart and Schoenberg. The book is interesting and designed to attract and engage.

E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion* (Princeton, $22, $8.95 paper).

Dora Vallier, *Abstract Art* (Viking, $12.95), and Dore Ashton, *The Unknown Shore* (Viking). These are the best of the many analyses and histories of abstract and Abstract Expressionist art I've read lately.

CRITICISM AND LETTERS: Robert Scholes, *Structuralism in Literature (Yale, $13).*

Walter Jackson Bate, *Samuel Johnson* (Harcourt, $19.95) and *John Keats* (Harvard, $22.50).

Phyllis Rose, *Woman of Letters: A Life of Virginia Woolf* (Oxford, $12.95). This critical biography, which was nominated for a National Book Award, provides an intelligent reading of Woolf's life in the light of the issues raised in her work. This is a book of ideas, not of gossip: it deals incisively with issues intellectual, social, and artistic, and performs valuable close readings on the texts. It presents a wide range of ideas with a creative and analytical intelligence; it draws characters with power and lively sympathy; and it handles the matter of Woolf with a startling and agreeable wit and enjoyment. Even the footnotes are funny.

Anne Fremantle

THE NATURE of evil has been explored thoroughly, at great length, and to me satisfactorily, in two books published this year by two of the greatest U.S. writers living. Norman Mailer's *The Executioner's Song* (Little Brown, $16.95, 1056 pp.) deals with the life and death of Gary Gilmore, executed for two murders. He was headed for disaster from his youth up. Mailer, who spent two years researching and writing Gilmore's life, interviewed, in depth, everyone who touched his life, from Gilmore's mother, sister—various girlfriends—to his victims' relatives. Mailer doesn't editorialize, or moralize: this is how it was, how these people were. In telling this sad story, he has shown, not the 'banality of evil' as Hannah Arendt called it, but the inevitable sequence of causality. As the Upanishads (1500 B.C.) point out, from evil only evil can come, and the Dhammapada (500 B.C.) notes that "What we are today comes from our thoughts of yesterday; our life is the creation of our mind." To *show* this, without preaching, for over a thousand pages, makes of Mailer's book a great work of art.

William Styron's *Sophie's Choice* (Random House, $12.95, 384 pp.) deals also with the problem of evil, but in the form of a novel. Ever since the Lord told Isaiah (45.7) "I form the light, and create darkness, I make peace and create evil, I the Lord do all these things," human beings have been struggling to fit these words into the context of their own free choice, however limited by determinism, genetics, environment (Darwin, Freud, Marx). Styron takes Shopie's choice and shows, with immense subtley, how even in a concentration camp, it was still free. He has chosen a non-Jewish victim of

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Hitler (we are apt to forget there were five million non-Jews killed by Hitler — Poles, Resistance groups in all the occupied countries, Communists, more than 5000 Germans killed after the July 20th Putsch, and many—but not enough!—priests, nuns, and simply concerned Christians. Styron's threnody, despite its tragic ending, is an affirmation that at every moment there is still "our and Adam's choice" (as St. Ephraim the Syrian put it).

The Dancing Floor, by Michael M. McNamara (Crown, $7.95, 212 pp.) is a novel about two brothers in today's Ireland, who become involved with opposite sides, and, this too, is a novel about good and evil and free choice. McNamara (regrettably killed last September in a motor accident) never lapses into Manichaeanism—that horrid heresy Christianity inherited from Zoroastrianism—but shows how willingly the good can lead to evil through faulty vision and values. It is as exciting as a detective story, and none the worse for the two heroes fumbling in a Dantean dark wood.

Rumer Godden's twentieth book, *Five for Sorrow, Ten for Joy* (Viking, $10.95, 262 pp.) is a splendid celebration, in the form of a novel, of the victory of good over evil. Lise, the English-born heroine, becomes the madam of a chic Parisian brothel, but at thirty-one, is condemned to life-imprisonment for killing her ex-lover, Patrice, a pimp. In prison, visited by one of the French Dominican Sisters of Bethanie, she finds she has a vocation. Released for good behavior after some years, she joins the Sisters, and, in time, visits the prison where she herself served time. She is pursued by Lucette, who loves her, and Vivi, who hates her. At story's end, Lucette is killed by Vivi, thinking to kill Lise. In spite of this tragedy, Rumer Godden has written a glorious affirmation of good triumphant.

Elizabeth Hardwick calls her *Sleepless Nights* (Random House, $8.95, 176 pp.) a novel, but it seems more an exploration of some of her own multiple contacts with a variety of people, who impinge on her life, but whose reality for her is their relationship—as Rabindranath Tagore said all reality is. She fashions her *Sleepless Nights* into an exquisite piece of embroidery, colors and contours blending in a book whose workmanship is as subtle as it is masterly.

Janet Groth

REFLECTING UPON my reading over the past year, I discover the voices that have stayed with me with a haunting clarity are not, to my surprise, the voices of Cacciato and Garp (I am still catching up with last year's fiction) but real people speaking or writing in their own voices—which only means I have been reminded again that one of the most fascinating fields of literature is occupied by letters, journals and memoirs.

The books I wish to take note of here are: *Letters of Flannery O'Connor: The Habit of Being*, Selected and edited by Sally Fitzgerald (Farrar, Straus, $15, 617 pp.) and *The Nabokov-Wilson Letters: Correspondence between Vladimir Nabokov and Edmund Wilson, 1940-1971*, edited, annotated and with an introduction by Simon Kalinsky (Harper & Row, $15).

I know that *The Habit of Being*, the volume of Flannery O'Connor's letters, has already been done splendid justice in these pages by Robert Phillips's review [Commonweal, 4/13/79]; yet I cannot forego the pleasure of quoting from them once more. In one of the many fine letters Flannery O'Connor shared with her friend "A" she writes: "I am reading the [Simone] Weil books now . . . Her life is almost a perfect blending of the Comic and the Terrible, which two things may be opposite sides of the same coin. In my own experience, everything funny I have written is more terrible than it is funny, or only funny because it is terrible, or only terrible because it is funny. Well Simone Weil's life is the most comical life I have ever read about and the most truly tragic and terrible. If I were to live long enough and develop as an artist to the proper extent, I would like to write a comic novel about a woman—and what is more comic and terrible than the angular intellectual proud woman approaching God inch by inch with ground teeth?" The letter ends curtly: "I must be off on my two aluminum legs."

The Nabokov-Wilson letters, like O'Connor's, are concerned in large part, naturally, with the profession of writing, the business as well as the art of it. They leave us a graphic record of the sheer drudgery and *fret* involved in the lives of all, even the most gifted, who attempt to make writing a significant source of their income. But the discussions about translation and literary matters that preoccupy both correspondents throughout the book were less interesting to me than the poignant record of broken friendship it also provides.

In the early letters there is a real sense of the delight each felt at having discovered in the other someone with whom to share literary enthusiasms and projects. The first letters soon warm to a first-name basis (Dear Bunny—Dear Volodya) accompanied by shared family holidays and jokes. They once actually shared the same pair of socks—darned, in turn by the then-Mrs. Wilson, Mary McCarthy and Vera Nabokov.

Further letters reflect a constant exchange of ideas and counsel: the more established Wilson serving as the mentor on publishing, Nabokov acting as the (often frustrated) instructor of Wilson in matters of Russian prosody. But there were signs of strain long before Wilson's unfavorable review of *Eugene Onegin*—the Pushkin classic which represented years of effort in translation and scholarship on Nabokov's part—brought them into a public quarrel.

Nabokov writes at the time of the breakup of Wilson's marriage to Mary McCarthy: "I do not know what to say to you except that I have been feeling 'very much' upset about the whole matter—especially as I did not hear from you directly and had to sift and combine various rumours." The Nabokovs, however, became very fond of Wilson's next wife, Elena (his last), and for a time all seemed well. Each praised the other's writing—Nabokov almost always with more warmth than Wilson. For example, in 1945 he writes: "Dear Bunny, I happened to read *The Crackup* the other night. I enjoyed it hugely—as well as your poem [Wilson's dedicatory poem to

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Fitzgerald]. I should love to have a copy of the book, as a Christmas present, say, with your autograph. Rich stuff, sane real stuff."

But a new element of reciprocal wounds begins to appear. Wilson refuses to avail himself of Nabokov's invitation to react to Stanley Edgar Hyman's attack when he certainly could have benefited from a chance to let off steam; the fact is he was never able to be as free with his feelings about himself as he was about books. Nabokov, for his part, is reluctant to show how hurt *he* is that Wilson seemed not to have read or cared about the two of his novels of most importance to him—*The Gift* and *Lolita*.

In any case, the letters become much less frequent after the early '50s. There is a touching gesture toward reconciliation by Nabokov in 1971, to which Wilson responds (in the last letter that was ever to pass between them) with the news that he has returned to the subject of their old quarrels in his book, *Upstate*, adding: "I hope it will not again impair our personal relations (it shouldn't)." A most affecting example of two masters of language unable to find the right words to say to each other.

One of the discomforts of reading this type of material is the uneasy feeling of voyeurism to which it gives rise. We are caught up in contemplating the mystery of personalities toward whom we have a strange relationship; while we are getting to know them, better, even, than they know themselves, they know us not. It is perhaps too safe a way to admit of honorable comfort—but what a privilege. What sane, real stuff!

Barbara Grizzuti Harrison

MANY BOOKS this year have given me pleasure; one book I love. I have practically bludgeoned all my friends into agreeing to buy Ronald Blythe's *The View In Winter: Reflections On Old Age* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, $12.95 288 pp.), although their first (predictable) reaction was that a book about senescence was bound to be dreary. Of course. *Senescence:* The word itself, with its repeated forbidding sibilants, is off-putting. The book is not dreary, however; it is gorgeous. Blythe, who *listens* so beautifully that the very idea of using a tape recorder to capture a life seems redundant, if not obscene, gives us "fragments of colourful minutiae"—the voices and partial biographies of old people in England and in rural Wales. Old people of varying social classes and temperaments talk about the past, and their recollections are vivid, lucid, poignant, funny . . . not cute (neither Blythe nor they sentimentalize), and, remarkably, inasmuch as many of them were brought up in the most appalling poverty, not rancorous. This book is the result of fourteen years of listening—truly a labor of love, and one that is informed by the gentle writer's graceful insights and his erudition.

The View In Winter is an eloquent—and frequently amusing—social history. And it is much more: To look at old people is to look in a mirror, to see our fate in theirs. Which is exactly why most of us, frightened, choose not to look; a shutter falls across our vision. But *The View in Winter* alters one's moral universe: One can never again, after having read this lovely book, choose not to look, not to see. Ronald Blythe brings the elderly where they belong—back into the circle of the living.

I had lunch with Ronald Blythe after I reviewed his book. (I could not, by the way, tell, nor did I trouble to discover, how old he is: One might just as easily have reckoned his age to be 45 or 65.) I had asked him how he accounted for the poetic cadences of almost all the old people who speak to us in *The View In Winter*. I thought it possible that Mr. Blythe had chosen to write a kind of poetic distillation of their rough speech. No, he said (perhaps too modestly): Even the imperfectly educated villagers with whom he spoke grew up hearing or reading *The Book of Common Prayer* and the Bible, and those noble words colored their speech. So their stories are prose poems, really. ("Let us sit upon the ground and tell sad tales of the death of kings.") They are prose poems that celebrate dailiness and the perfectly remembered isolated moment.

At that lunch, Mr. Blythe told me that near his house in Suffolk grows a mulberry tree planted by Milton's tutor; he eats mulberries from the bush Milton ate mulberries from. I cannot think of this story, and of the unselfconscious way in which Mr. Blythe told it, without being moved to tears. Ronald Blythe takes it as a matter of course that the past and the present mesh and mingle. He speaks of a friend's "deathday" as you and I might speak of a friend's birthday, an implicit recognition that in eternity time does not exist. Perhaps that is why his luminous and lyrical book is suffused with joy—although it in no way skirts the terrible and painful facts of aging and dying. I am in awe of his achievement; his book makes me very happy.

John N. Kotre

But often, in the din of strife,
There rises an unspeakable desire
After the knowledge of our buried life;
A thirst to spend our fire and restless force
In tracking out our true, original course;
A longing to inquire
Into the mystery of this heart which beats
So wild, so deep in us—to know
Whence our lives come and where they go.

—Matthew Arnold
"The Buried Life" (1852)

HOW SHALL a life be shaped, its story told, the course of its coming and going be charted? Daniel Levinson's *The Seasons of a Man's Life* (Knopf, $10.95, 384 pp.) is a welcome addition to the library of psychological literature on the life cycle. Welcome because it does not flatten individual biographies as it rolls in the heavy machinery of the "scientific method." Levinson has been criticized for linking his stages to highly specific age ranges, but his insistence is open to correction by later

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research. In the meantime, his book stands as a model of investigation that is both conscientious and useful. The generalist and the specialist will find it accessible. I found it helpful in a personal sense.

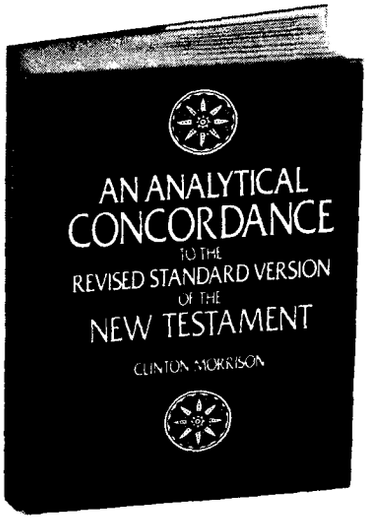
In *Women of Crisis* (Delacorte, $10, 320 pp.) Robert and Jane Coles approach lives in a different way. No pattern or set of stages is elicited from their portraits of five poor women struggling to stand upright. A theoretical structure does not intrude upon the narratives; uniqueness reigns. Yet a common thread of persistence and hope binds these profiles of a black migrant worker, a displaced mountaineer, a frightened Chicana, a "masculine" Eskimo girl, and a maid in the home of a well-to-do Cambridge family. There is far more dramatic tension in these stories than in much of Robert Coles's earlier work.

Trying to follow the method pioneered by Coles, I have come to appreciate the difficulty of condensing a life into a book, into thirty pages or ten or one, into a paragraph, a sentence, even a phrase. The trick is to find an incident or moment from which far vistas of a life can be seen and to stand there as you tell its story. Leo Tolstoy did that masterfully, I found on rereading short stories like *The Death of Ivan Ilych, Master and Man,* and *The Kreutzer Sonata.* I particularly enjoyed the last, a tale told to strangers on a train of a man whose violent passions build until they are released by the playing of a duet for piano and violin.

In contemporary fiction, I was puzzled and then intrigued by Bernard Malamud's experiments in *Dubin's Lives* (Farrar, Straus, Giroux, $10.00, 362 pp.). Dubin is a biographer whose strategy is to lose his life in his subject's. "The joining—the marriage?—has to be, or you can't stay on the vicarious track of the past or whatever 'truth' you think your're tracking." But Dubin's approach is more than strategy; it is neurosis. He doesn't know where he ends and his subjects begin. His very name, Du-Bin (the German equivalent of You-Am) clouds the distinction between I and thou. And Malamud himself, who refers to Dubin in the first, second, and third persons, keeps the boundary between himself and *his* subject obscured in fog. The result is an effective literary portrayal of a man with diffuse identity, hollow inside and unable to parent, a variant of the "new narcissist" of the seventies.

Finally, I should mention James and Evelyn Whitehead's *Christian Life Patterns* (Doubleday, $8.95, 216 pp.) a book that takes the life-markers identified by Levinson and other researchers and correlates them with markers already present in Christian ritual. Their work contains practical suggestions for ministers wishing to take advantage of new insights into the life cycle and, I hope, foreshadows theological reflections in the eighties.

A gift for all seasons!



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Saul Maloff

MOST OF WHAT passes nowadays by the name of structuralist poetics, or literary aesthetics, or more simply theoretical criticism will surely soon dissolve into limbo—has already done or is right now doing so—leaving not a trace behind, affecting the way we read and think about literature not at all, a matter of momentary interest to graduate students and their mentors awaiting the advent of the next critical wave. For criticism as Lit Crit, a science dismal as any other, has more to do with the economics and sociology of the academy and its rites than with poems and novels—with, precisely, what Adam Smith called the "size of the market." But if there are serious "general" readers who think that literature is too important to be left to the schoolmen and who, despite everything and for whatever curious if not actually perverse reasons, themselves sometimes read books *about* literature, here is a small scattering of recent books worth their attention.

The late Philip Rahv's posthumous collection, *Essays on Literature & Politics, 1932-1972* (Houghton Mifflin, $15, 366 pp.), reminds us again how valuable a literary intellectual he was. For a true sense of his range and power, this volume should be read in sequence with his earlier collection, *Literature & The Sixth Sense*; but here is scope enough: some still interesting essays on American writing and even more on his abiding passion, the great Russian novelists of the 19th century. His running war against Stalinism seems a bit tired by now, but that may be because the terms of his

polemics have been generally absorbed as our received ideas. Above all, the essays provide examples of the solidity and depth of discourse when the literary imagination is enriched and extended by a complex political intelligence and sense of history; against it, most formalist criticism seems meager and desiccated. For all their differences, Irving Howe is virtually the only critic around these days who stands in that tradition, starting with his early *Politics and the Novel*, and continuing with his recent collection, *Celebrations and Attacks: Thirty Years of Literary and Cultural Commentary* (Horizon, $14.95, 256 pp.), almost all of it devoted to contemporary writers, most of them American. As is not infrequently the case with Howe, allowances must be made for some stumbling, possibly merely hasty, infelicitous writing, and it is true, as it is of all these collections—indeed of collections as a species of book—that some pieces might have been permitted to molder; but these cavils entered, it must be said that taken all in all—as literary critic, as social and political historian, as editor of *Dissent*, as our only socialist intellectual who is all these—Howe's is a singularly valuable and authoritative voice. For his counterpart, look to Raymond Williams in England.

Marvin Mudrick can be insufferable—strident, gleefully nasty where the work under review isn't worth the bother, hyperkinetic, wrongheaded at times (as on Edmund Wilson), too clever by half (as in the very title of his new collection, *Books Are Not Life But Then What Is?*, Oxford University Press, $12.95, 348 pp.); but he can also be genuinely illuminating, judicious and generous, lethal where the cause requires it, always strongly intelligent, as good on Pepys, Jane Austen, Dickens, as on some contemporary novelist whose name we have forgotten since the review first appeared in a periodical. Roger Sale is always worth reading: balanced, firmly discriminating, a critic of exemplary manners and taste (for examples of which see his collection, *On Not Being Good Enough: Writings of a Working Critic*, Oxford, $12.95, 218 pp.). And though I've praised Wilfrid Sheed's *The Good Word and Other Words* (Dutton, $10.95, 300 pp.) in these pages before, a good book is hard to find and can't be praised enough. Myself, I would gladly read Sheed on David Ricardo's Iron Law of Wages or Gray's Anatomy and fully expect in both instances to be amused, interested, edified.

Roland Barthes eludes definitions and categories; but no matter. If he wants to call himself a sociologist and lexicologist, that's all right with me. When he's good, he's splendid, walking through the occasions and artifacts of contemporary life making startling connections between fire and water, slime and ozone, and more often than not making them stick in this collection (*The Eiffel Tower and other Mythologies*, Hill and Wang, $9.95, 152 pp.). His influential essays in theoretical criticism are to be found elsewhere, primarily in *Writing Degree Zero*, published in 1953. For a severe treatment of Barthes as a literary theoretician (and other matters) see Gerald Graff's *Literature Against Itself* (University of Chicago, $15, 260 pp.), a strongly-argued attack on vogueish tendencies in criticism and literature, "conservatism" at its best, as serious as John Gardner's "moral" criticism of the contemporary novel is fatuous and self-serving.

David O'Brien

AMONG GENERAL works of history nothing this year can top Barbara Tuchman's *A Distant Mirror*, last year's gem, but Thomas Pakenham's *The Boer War* (Random House, $20, 768 pp.) comes close. This powerful, dramatic story of courage and incompetence provides important new information about a major turning point in the history of imperialism. Its portrait of national pride, personal ambition, racism, deceit and self-deception, and sheer brutality lends perspective and insight to our reflections on more recent episodes of empire. Two of our own are subjects of important recent studies. Peter Wyden provides the most detailed account yet of John Kennedy's disaster in *Bay of Pigs: The Untold Story* (Simon and Schuster,

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$12.95, 352 pp.). Even more relevant is William Shawcross' excellent *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia*, (Simon and Schuster, $13.95, 467 pp.), a reliable, scholarly, morally correct reminder of our responsibility for the present disaster. One might have it at hand while reading Mr. Kissinger's just published memoir over the holidays.

Two very special works which should be high on the Christmas list are Frances Fitzgerald's *America Revised* (Atlantic/Little Brown, $9.95, 240 pp.) an important analysis of American history textbooks of interest to all who wonder how our images of the nation and the world are formed, and Madonna Kolbenschlag's truly brilliant *Kiss Sleeping Beauty Good Bye* (Doubleday, $8.95, 244 pp.). The latter is the best book on the "woman question" I have read in a decade; it would make an excellent gift for men and women uncertain about feminism; it is intelligent, balanced, profoundly humane and absolutely convincing.

Commonweal readers will have a special interest in several works of Catholic scholarship. Giancarlo Zizola's *The Utopia of Pope John XXIII* (Orbis, $9.95, 379 pp.) is an excellent study of the man and his leadership, a fitting reminder of Pope John's intention to turn Catholics away from pre-occupation with themselves and their church to a commitment to humankind in the midst of global crisis. For those who take the development of the church's social thought inspired by Pope John with real seriousness, Jesuit David Hollenbach has provided the most important American contribution since Father Murray with *Claims in Conflict; Retrieving and Renewing the Catholic Human Rights Tradition* (Paulist, $5.95, 219 pp.).

A personal favorite this year which should interest liberal Catholics is the excellent collection of *The Brownson-Hecker Correspondence* (University of Notre Dame Press, $20, 352 pp.) lovingly and skillfully edited by Joseph F. Gower and Richard M. Leliaert. Two of the most intelligent and interesting figures in American Catholic history, Orestes Brownson and Isaac Hecker

helped each other find the church and in their different geographies of faith shed light on the central issues of Catholic presence in the United States.

Finally, the publishing event of 1979 for *Commonweal* readers, providing *the* gift book for this year, was the appearance of Sally Fitzgerald's marvelous collection of the letters of Flannery O'Connor *The Habit of Being* (Farrar, Straus, Giroux, $15, 617 pp.) This book has received nothing but superlatives from reviewers; here is revealed a woman of wit, wisdom, courage and beauty, of "strength and self-possession" to use Miss Kolbenschlag's term for the ideal woman. This book provides one of those rare reading experiences from which one emerges knowing one is better off for having encountered this person. Buy, and give, this book.

Pheme Perkins

FOR THOSE interested in the New Testament, its cultural milieu and its contemporary applications the past year has seen publication of some exciting new work. Best of all, these directions are being pursued by careful scholars, who are not interested in keeping their pearls locked in safe deposit but who seek to involve a wider audience of interested readers in their investigations. Thus, one has a choice of intelligible books on the "cutting edge" of scholarship that are free of superficial generalization, scholarly inaccuracies, and patronizing tone—most are also in paperback.

Readers still puzzled by the various methods used in analyzing Biblical materials have two excellent guides. G. Lohfink's *The Bible Now I Get It!* (Doubleday, $5.95, 174 pp.) provides a humorous look at the literary forms of Biblical material along with some very responsible exegetical discussion of the divorce sayings, infancy stories and passion narratives. D. Harrington surveys all the various methods and issues in New Testament interpretation and illustrates them with excellent examples in his *Interpreting the New Testament* (Michael Glazier, $4.95, 152 pp.). Most treatments of first century A.D. Judaism contain copious references to the writings of Philo of Alexandria. New Testament commentaries cite this Jewish philosopher to provide parallels to the Johannine Logos, Pauline ethics, and the symbolic interpretations of Old Testament liturgy in Hebrews. Now we finally have an introduction to his thought for the general reader in S. Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria* (Oxford, 204 pp. $4.50).

Treatments of individual New Testament writings have taken new and exciting forms. A. Y. Collins's *The Apocalypse* (Michael Glazier, $4.95, 155 pp.) brings knowledge of cultural symbols and attention to literary patterns and structure to this intriguing and enigmatic book. Father Raymond Brown has once again turned to the Johannine materials. In *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (Paulist, $3.95, 204 pp.), he sketches a fascinating picture of the sociological and theological development of the Johannine church from its origins into the second century. This orientation characterizes much of the new work in New Testament studies. Scholars are trying to understand the interaction of community structure, history and theological reflection in the development of earliest Christianity. J. P. Meier's study of Matthew, *The Vision of Matthew: Christ, Church and Morality in the First Gospel* (Paulist, $5.95, 270 pp.), raises similar issues in the area of Christology and ethics without relying on the sociological reconstructions that underlie Brown's analysis. Meier wishes to show the interrelation between Matthew's picture of Jesus, his understanding of Christian ethics,and his vision of the Church as the new, eschatological people of God.

Finally, two quite different books ad-

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dress themselves to concerns of contemporary culture in treating the New Testament. Mary Ann Tolbert describes various literary approaches to analyzing a parable, *Perspectives on the Parables: An Approach to Multiple Interpretations* (Fortress, $8.95, 141 pp.). Although she does not analyze many of the parables in detail, students interested in rhetorical criticism will find her examples extremely helpful. She also includes an informed discussion of attempts to apply Freudian psycho-dynamics to the parable of the prodigal son. Freudian psychology reappears in R. Hammerton-Kelly's treatment of Biblical images of God as Father (Mother), *God the Father: Theology and Patriarchy in the Teaching of Jesus* (Fortress, $5.95, 128 pp.). Both exegetes show an ability to appreciate issues raised by the Freudian revolution while using their Biblical material to raise issues about its claim to be a universal hermeneutic for all cultural phenomena. Unfortunately, Hammerton-Kelly's appeal to Ricoeur in this regard is almost as obscure as its source. But the reader should not be deterred. His treatment of the Biblical metaphors for God as Father/Mother bring out a richness in the symbol that quite belies the negative press it has been getting from some radical feminists.

Thus, there has been plenty of interesting reading this year. Most of it from the smaller publishing houses with religious affiliations, and quite unlike the trendy, sensationalism that has characterized the lists from some of the commercial houses. Creative biblical reflection is alive and well, though the good seed and the good ground may be a bit less obvious in the public forum.

Robert Phillips

THERE WAS not a single novel or fiction collection in 1979 that enthralled me the way *The Stories of John Cheever* did in 1978. Malamud's *Dubin's Lives*, Styron's *Sophie's Choice*, and Roth's *The Ghost Writer*, to name three, delivered less than promised. The latter especially fell short; if only Roth had had the daring to leave open the tantalizing possibility that Anne Frank was alive and well in America!

American poetry, on the other hand, fared better this year. There were fine new collections by John Ashbery, James Dickey, Irving Feldman, Isabella Gardner, William Heyen, John Hollander, Richard Howard, Donald Justice, Stanley Kunitz, and Howard Moss.

This was also the year of a delightful poetry translation: A. Poulin, Jr.'s rendition, from the French, of Rilke's *The Roses & The Windows* (Graywolf Press, P.O. Box 142, Port Townsend, Wash., $10, 102 pp.). Poulin published in 1977 a well-received translation of Rilke's two fundamentally-linked masterworks, *The Duino Elegies* and *The Sonnets to Orpheus*. Like those, these poems are celebrations and affirmations of human life. Written between 1922 and 1926, they are part of the nearly 400 poems in French which Rilke wrote following composition of the *Elegies* and *Sonnets*. (Graywolf promises two more volumes.) And unlike Eliot's French poems, Rilke's seem inventive and powerful.

Read individually, they may seem slight. But read in sequence, we perceive Rilke inventing variations and fugues upon his two stated subjects, roses and windows. As the first publication in English translation of these fragile, glass-like poems, the book deserves our attention. Poulin has preserved the delicate qualities of Rilke's French, as he did earlier in translating from the German: "A single rose is every rose / and this one: irreplaceable, / perfect, a supple vocable / by the text of things enclosed." This little volume is also a beautiful example of bookmaking. The jacket is inspired, the binding sumptuous. Graywolf Press accomplishes what many larger presses no longer attempt.

Of this year's individual collections, I am especially impressed by two. The first and older poet is Frederick Morgan, whose latest, *Death Mother and Other Poems*, has just been published (University of Illinois Press, $10, $3.95 paper, 112 pp.). I recall that Morgan's first collection, *A Book of Change*, was misread by some critics, who seemed to feel his work belonged with the how-to-live books (Hesse's *Siddhartha?* Gibran's *The Prophet?*) This is unfair. Morgan *does* deal with the cosmic awareness of the essential oneness of existence. But his philosophical and theological poems were always less vital than his love poems to wife and family. And since that first collection, his work has increasingly embraced the body as well as the soul—as the highly memorable and original title-poem of this, his fourth collection, demonstrates. "Death Mother" is a mixture of myth and religion, war and domesticity, life and death.

Morgan's collection is versatile and varied. There are historical and autobiographical narratives, dreams and fables, dramatic dialogues and oriental imitations. It contains at least two stunning poems which belong in any anthology of post-modern American poetry: "The Turtle" and "February 11, 1977." With

CRITICS

HARVEY COX, *professor of Divinity at Harvard, is the author of* The Secular City, The Seduction of the Spirit *and* Turning East.

ANNIE DILLARD's Pilgrim at Tinker Creek *won the 1975 Pulitzer Prize. Her most recent book is* Holy the Firm.

ANNE FREMANTLE's *latest book is* Woman's Way to God *(St. Martin's Press).*

JANET GROTH *is a member of the English Department at the University of Cincinnati.*

BARBARA GRIZZUTI HARRISON *is the author of* Visions of Glory: A History and a Memory of Jehovah's Witnesses *(Simon and Schuster/Touchstone); a collection of her essays will be published in May.*

JOHN N. KOTRE *is the author of recent biographies of Andrew Greeley (*The Best of Times, the Worst of Times, *Nelson-Hall) and Pat and Patty Crowley (*Simple Gifts, *Andrews and McMeel.)*

SAUL MALOFF, *a novelist and critic, is a regular contributor to* Commonweal *and other magazines.*

DAVID O'BRIEN *teaches history at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester.*

PHEME PERKINS *teaches theology at Boston College and is the author of* The Gnostic Dialogue *(Paulist).*

ROBERT PHILLIPS *is the author of several books including* The Confessional Poets *and a collection of poems,* The Pregnant Man.

GORDON C. ZAHN, *author of* War, Conscience and Dissent, *teaches sociology at the University of Massachusetts. His latest book is* Another Part of the War: The Camp Simon Story *(University of Massachusetts).*

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this volume, Frederick Morgan takes his place among a handful of contemporary American poets it is impossible to ignore.

The other recommended new collection, interestingly enough, is also published by University of Illinois Press: The book is *Goshawk, Antelope* ($10, $3.95 paper, 128 pp.), and the poet is David Smith, one of our most vigorous and accomplished younger poets. Unlike much "poetry" published today, Smith's poems are not disposable; they must be contemplated. He is haunted by the landscape from which he takes his inspiration and sustenance. The goshawk and the antelope of the title are but two images for love and death which swoop and lope throughout his thoughtful book. There has never been a more elemental poetic landscape since Robinson Jeffers!

Yet unlike Jeffers, Dave Smith fishes around delight's rock. He is not a misanthrope or even a pessimist; his poems most often examine the insinuations of joy in the dream-contending world. Taking their particulars from the natural world, he searches for truths about our most fundamental concerns:

> Long ago I saw that first wet glimmering of hawk tongue
> and did not know, as I know now, the tiny scream
> lingers only to say what has happened.
> In pinion, already, eyes lift and are
> too late, the heart chills and flakes.

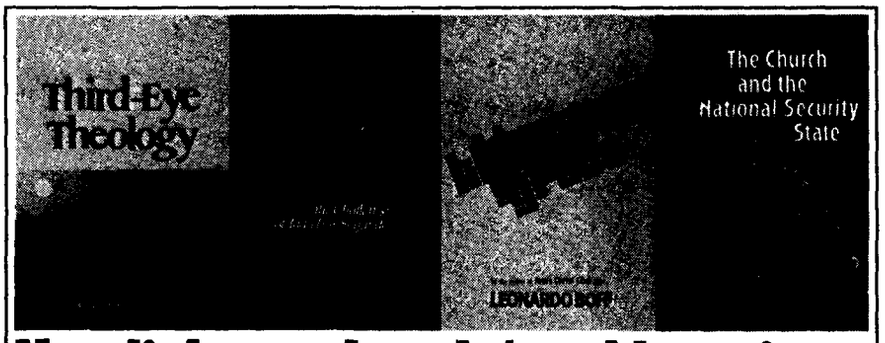
I recommend his work to those who think today's younger poets (Dave Smith was born in 1942) write only political folk ballads, electronic guitar music, or militant feminist manifestos. Here is one who cares about language, and has never written a trivial poem.

A final book: One of America's finest lyric poets, Howard Moss, has written a luminous book of criticism about that gigantic poem, Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*. Titled *The Magic Lantern of Marcel Proust* (NonPareil Books, 124 pp., $4.95), it has been reissued in a permanent paperback on acid-free paper that will not yellow with age, and the pages of which have been sewn in signatures so they will not fall out. (Considering the state of today's publishing, this quality is worthy of mention.)

Moss's study, fifteen years after original publication, still seems to me the most accessible examination of Proust's difficult classic, as well as the most illuminating. Moss's sympathy with Proust's world, his poetic sensibility, and his admirable determination to write a non-academic book (there is not a single footnote!) have coalesced to form an enchanting essay on that greatest of disenchanters.

Gordon Zahn

THERE IS reason to fear we are learning to "live with" genocide. Decent-minded people all over the world may continue to condemn the practice, but even their most fervent condemnations carry unmistakable overtones of fatalistic resignation. Worse still, large numbers have come to accept, even jus-



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Youth Center

In a densely populated Santiago slum the sisters of the Sacred Hearts are now building a Youth Center where food and health care will be administered. Named *Our Lady of Peace*, it will become a second home for thousands of children and youngsters in true need. One part of the Center will be the permanent home for abandoned girls and those in more desperate general condition. A lay staff will assist in matters of psychology and education. The Center will be run under direct responsibility of the sisters of the Sacred Hearts. Much money is needed to complete the building. All contributions welcome. Address questions and checks to Madre María del Carmen Pérez, SSCC, Casilla 15001, NUNOA, SANTIAGO 11, CHILE.

Editor

EDITOR who wants to use journalistic talents to develop and edit a weekly which will serve as an informative, formative, prophetic voice to the local church. Resumé and vision. Box 16.

tify, the instrumental destruction of human life on a massive scale. Beyond the blood lust of an Amin or Bogassa or Pol Pot's insane vision of an indigenous socialist paradise emerging from the total destruction of a nation's past, there is the "socially therapeutic" elimination of a million or so unborn children in our country alone, upheld as a matter of "protecting rights." Nor can we overlook the myth of a national security resting upon the readiness and the willingness to commit nuclear genocide on a scale that would put all former experiments of that nature to shame.

Though its horrendous toll has already been surpassed, Hitler's carefully planned and systematically conducted effort to exterminate European Jewry remains the classic example of the practice of genocide in modern times. The memory of Auschwitz haunts us, as well it should, in the various forms of television specials, college courses, national symposia, and all the other recent Holocaust-related developments. When it no longer does, Justice Jackson's dire warning at Nuremberg will have become a prophecy fulfilled: "If we cannot eliminate the causes and prevent the repetition of these barbaric events, it is not an irresponsible prophecy to say that this twentieth century may yet succeed in bringing the doom of civilization."

Now that we have learned this awful capacity for genocide is universal and not a moral malignancy limited to one demented regime or one country or one race, it is our advantage to devote some attention to those few who somehow managed to avoid complicity in the evil to which most of their fellow countrymen succumbed. I should like, therefore, to recommend two books which deal with what might be called the "other side" of the Holocaust and which have not been given the serious attention they deserve. They are *The Assisi Underground* by Alexander Ramati (Stein and Day, $8.95, 181 pp.) and *Lest Innocent Blood be Shed* by Philip Hallie (Harper and Row, $12.95, 293 pp.).

Paired in this fashion they offer striking testimony to the potential that lies in individual Christian witness, Catholic or Protestant. Ramati details the astonishingly successful work of a Franciscan priest who was given the task by his local bishop of facilitating the escape of Jews. When all the escape routes were finally closed by the Nazis, he arranged to hide hundreds of Jews, including entire families, in religious houses throughout the Assisi area (including the convent of the rigidly cloistered Poor Clares!). In the process he found it necessary to organize a full-scale counterfeiting operation to provide his "wards" (and others, as word of their availability and quality spread) with false identity documents, passports, and the like.

For his part, Pastor Andre Trocmé, Hallie's Protestant hero, avoided deception and subterfuge as a matter of principle but still managed to convert his parish of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon in Vichy France into an open and non-violent center of resistance and refuge for Jews. The situations and methods may have differed, but the purposes and results were the same: significantly large numbers of Jewish refugees were saved from extermination.

Ramati wisely lets the Assisi story be told in the words of Fr. Niccacci himself, thereby avoiding Hallie's tendency to indulge in cloying adulation and pious foreshadowings that occasionally mar, but cannot diminish, the impact of his book. As it is, we are fortunate to have these accounts. Both authors happened upon their stories at the end of World War II but did not get around to pursuing their intentions to make them public until twenty years and more had passed. One wonders how many other tales of resistance, equally inspiring in their heroism, have been lost as these almost were.

Against the background of Christian failure that contributed to the tragedy of the Nazi years, the determined resistance of two men and two communities might not seem like much. No one could deny that these accomplishments are not enough to redress the balance or excuse the overall record of silence and complicity. Even so—and this is the lesson they leave to our genocide-prone age—they provide encouraging evidence of what can be done by individuals inspired and strengthened by a total commitment to Christ and his teachings.

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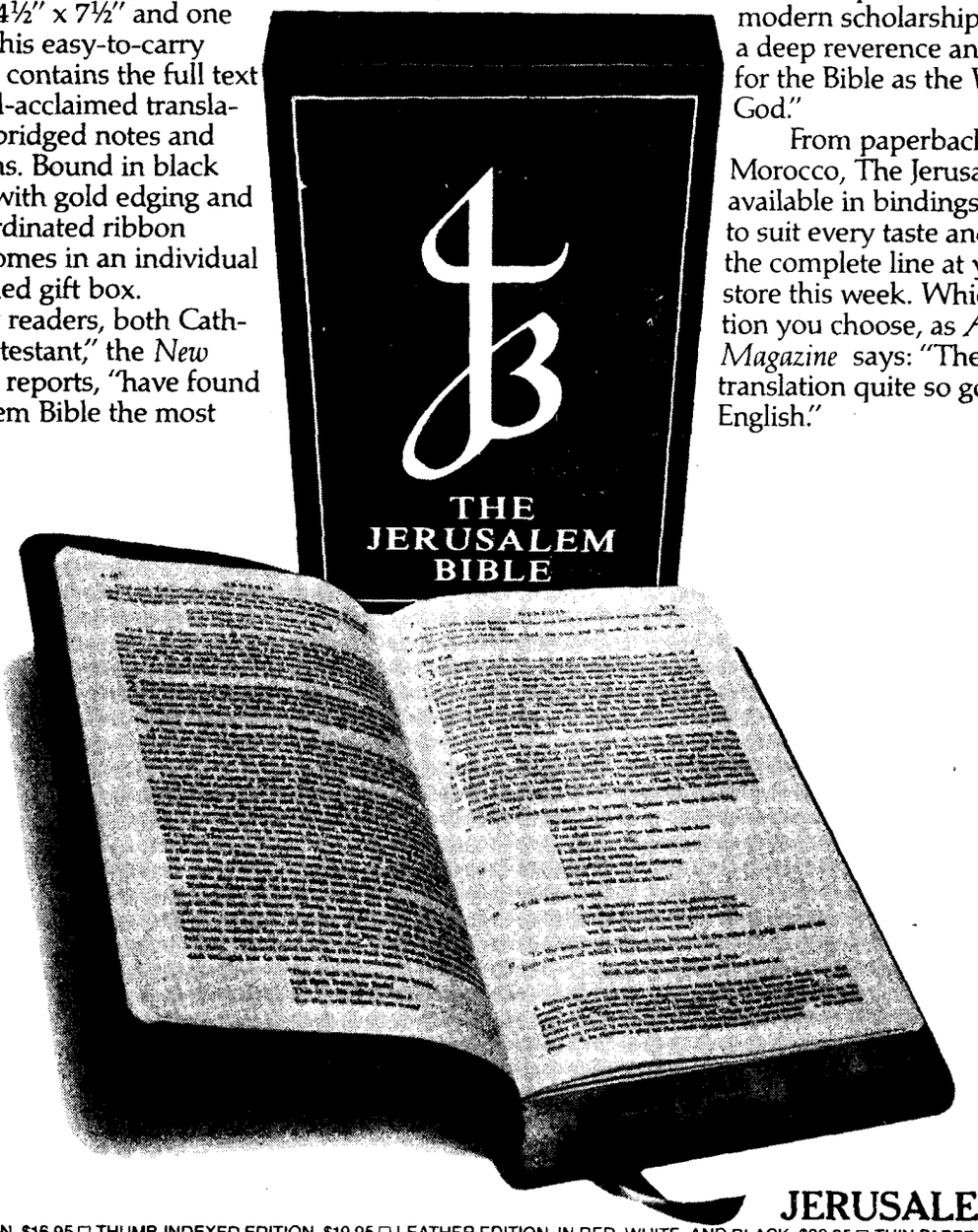

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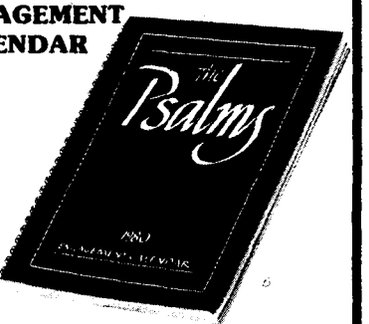

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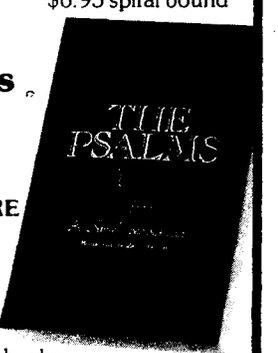

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